







GLEANINGS IN EUROPE.

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ENGLAND:

BY

A N A M E R I C A N .

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

*PHILADELPHIA:*

CAREY, LEA, AND BLANCHARD.

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## P R E F A C E .

THE American who should write a close, philosophical, just, popular, and yet comprehensive view of the fundamental differences that exist between the political and social relations of England and those of his own country, would confer on the latter one of the greatest benefits it has received since the memorable events of July 4, 1776. That was a declaration of political independence, only, while this might be considered the foundation of the mental emancipation which alone can render the nation great, by raising its opinion to the level of its facts.

This work lays no claim to a merit so distinguished. It is intended solely as a part of the testimony, of which an incalculable mass is yet required, that, under the slow operation of time, and in the absence of such an effort of genius as has just been named, it is to be hoped, will, sooner or later, produce something like the same result.

Some pains have been taken to persuade the reading world, that the writer of this book is peculiarly prejudiced against Great Britain, and it may be expedient to clear the way for the evidence he is about to give, by a few explanations. He might be content to refer to the work itself, perhaps, for proofs to the contrary; but there are many who would still insist on seeing antipathies in truths, and rancour in principle.

There is no very apparent motive, why the writer of

this book should be particularly prejudiced against Great Britain. Personally, he was kindly treated, by many of her most distinguished men ; he is as strongly convinced as his worst enemy can be, that, as an author, he has been extolled beyond his merits ; nor has he failed to receive quite as much substantial remuneration, as he can properly lay claim to. In no country has he ever been as *well* treated, as in England ; not even in his own ; although, since some of his opinions have appeared, he has not escaped the usual abuse that seems to flow so easily from the Anglo-Saxon tongue.

The writer will now give his own account of what he conceives to be the origin of this erroneous notion. A part of the American travellers have earned for themselves, a well-deserved reputation of being the most flagrant tuft-hunters, who enter the British empire. Of this amiable peculiarity, the writer has not yet been accused, and they who have the consciousness of not having always preserved their own self-respect in the English circles, are a little too much disposed, perhaps, to quarrel with those who have.

Anecdotes have been circulated concerning the writer's "sayings and doings" while in England ; some in print, and more verbally, and all to his prejudice. Many of these tales have reached his ears, but he has, hitherto, been content to let them circulate without contradiction. This may be a proper time to say that not one of them is true. He has given an account of a little occurrence, of this nature, expressly with the view to show the reader, the manner in which mole-hills become exaggerated into mountains, through the medium of three thousand miles, and with the hope

that the better portion of his countrymen may see the danger of yielding credit to tales that have their origin in antipathies to their own nation.

The English do not like the Americans. There is a strong disposition in them to exaggerate and circulate any thing that has a tendency to throw ridicule and contumely on the national character—and this bias, coupled with the irritation that is a consequence of seeing others indifferent to things for which their own deference is proverbial, has given rise to many silly reports, that affect others besides the writer. On the other hand, so profound is the deference of the American to England, and so sensitive his feelings to her opinion, that he is disposed to overlook that essential law of justice which exacts proof before condemnation.

It is just to say that a traveller should go through a country observant, but silent as regards its faults; that, on the subject of the superior merits of his own system, modesty and deference to the feelings of others are his cue. But when we come to apply these rules they are liable to qualifications. If those he visits *will* provoke comparisons, they should not complain that they are made intelligently and with independence, so long as they are made temperately. Had the disposition in the English to comment freely and ignorantly on America, before natives of the country been early met with manliness and a desire, in particular, *to sustain the institutions*, the idle tales alluded to would never have had an existence. It is as natural, as it is easy, for those who have fallen short of the mark in this respect, to say that others have gone beyond it. Men who have been disposed to accept attentions

on any terms, are not always the best judges of propriety.

England has experienced essential changes since the period of these letters. It is said more knowledge of, and a better feeling towards, America, now exist in the country. But, in carrying out the design of his whole work, the writer has been obliged to respect the order of time, and to portray things as he saw them when he was in the island. A future work may repair some of the faults that have arisen from this circumstance.

It is quite probable that this book contains many false notions. They are, however, the mistakes of a conscientious observer, and must be attributed solely to the head. Its opinions will run counter to the prejudices of much the largest portion of what are called the intelligent classes of America, and quite as a matter of course, will be condemned. An attempt to derange any of the established opinions of this part of American Society, more especially on subjects connected with the aristocratical features of the English government, meets with the success that usually accompanies all efforts to convince men against their wishes. There is no very profound natural mystery in the desire to be better off than one's fellows. The philosopher who constructs a grand theory of government, on the personal envy, the strife, and the heart-burnings of a neighbourhood, is fitted by nature to carve a Deity from a block of wood.

# ENGLAND.

## LETTER I.

TO CAPT. W. BRANFORD SHUBRICK, U. S. N.

IT was a fine February day, when we left the *Hôtel Dessin* to embark for Dover. The quay was crowded with clamorous porters, while the *gensdarmes* had an eye to the police regulations, lest a stray rogue, more or less, might pass undetected between the two great capitals of Europe. As I had placed myself in the hands of a regular *commissionaire* belonging to the hotel, we had no other trouble than that of getting down a ladder of some fifteen steps, into the boat. The rise and fall of the water is so great, in these high narrow seas, that vessels are sometimes on a level with the quays, and at others three or four fathoms below them.

We had chosen the English steam-packet, a government boat, in preference to the French, from a latent distrust of Gallic seamanship. The voyage

was not long, certainly, but, short as it was, we reaped the advantage of a good choice, in beating our competitor by more than an hour.

It is possible to see across the Straits of Dover, in clear weather, but, on this occasion, we had nothing visible before us, but an horizon of water, as we paddled through the long entrance of the little haven, into the North Sea. The day was calm, and, an unusual circumstance in swift tides and narrow passages, the channel was as smooth as a pond. Even the ground swell was too gentle to disturb the *omelettes* of M. Dessin's successor.

The difference of character in the two great nations that lie so near each other, as almost to hear each other's cocks crow, is even visible on the strait that separates them. On the coast of France, we saw a few fishing boats, with tanned sails, catering for the *restaurants* of Paris, while the lofty canvass of countless ships rose in succession from the bosom of the sea, as we shot over towards the English shore. I think we had made more than fifty square-rigged vessels, by the time we got close in with the land. Several were fine India-men, and not a few were colliers, bound to that focus of coal-smoke, London.

I passed the Straits of Dover, as a sailor, four times, during the years 1806 and 1807. At that period England was still jealous of the views of Napoleon. In the autumn of the former year, in particular, I remember that we were off Dungeness,

just as the day dawned, and a more eloquent picture of watchfulness cannot be imagined, than the channel presented on that occasion. Near a hundred sail were in sight, and, including a fleet just anchoring in the Downs, much the greater portion of them were cruisers. The nearness of the two coasts enabled the French occasionally to pick up a prize in the narrow waters, and all this care had become necessary to protect the trade of London: \* No better proof of the inferiority of the French, as a maritime people need be given, than the simple fact that they have ports, which no skill can blockade, within thirty leagues of the mouth of the Thames, and that England maintained the commerce of her capital throughout the whole of a long and vindictive war. I think a maritime people would have driven half the trade to Liverpool, or Bristol, within the first five years. If the Yankees had a hole to run into, so near the river, it would be unsafe punting above the bridges.

The packet was admirably managed, though we had nothing but smooth water to contend with, it is true ; still, the quiet and order that prevailed were good proofs that the people could have been used to a proper purpose at need. I was struck, however, with the diminutive appearance of the crew, which was composed of short little waddling fellows, who would have been bothered to do their work on the lower yard of a heavy ship. I have remarked this peculiarity, on several occasions, and



I feel very certain that the specimens of English seamen that you and I formerly knew, at home, were much above the level of the class. High wages usually command a high quality of service, and to this circumstance, I presume, we must look for the explanation. Certainly, I never saw any of these little fry, under our flag, and our old friend, Jack Freeman, would have made three or four of them.

After a run of two hours, the cliffs of Dover became distinctly visible, the haze having concealed them until we got pretty close in with the English coast. Although these celebrated hills will bear no comparison with the glorious shores of the Mediterranean, so well known to you, they are noble eminences, and merit the distinction of being mentioned by Shakspeare.

The town of Dover lies partly in a ravine between two of the cliffs, and partly on the strand at their bases. It appears as if nature had expressly left a passage to the sea between the hills, at this point, for, while the latter cannot be much less than three or four hundred feet high, there is scarcely a perceptible rise in the road which runs into the interior. The place is both naturally and poetically fine, for, when one reflects that this accidental formation is precisely at the spot where the island is nearest to the continent, it has the character of a magnificent gate-way to a great nation. The cliffs extend several miles on each side of the

town, melting away in swelling arable land, in the direction of Hastings and Dungeness. The latter is the point where the Conqueror landed, and I should think it the spot most favourable for a descent, anywhere on the English coast. The shore is still dotted with the remains of works erected during the period of the threatened invasion, and I well remember the time when they groaned under their bristling guns.

The view of Dover and of its cliffs, as we approached the shore, was pleasing, and, in some respects, fine. There was nothing of the classically picturesque in the artificial parts of the picture, it is true, but the place was crowded with so many recollections from English history, that even the old chimney-pots, with which the cliffs had pretty well garnished the place, had a venerable and attractive look. The castle, too, which stands on the eastern or rather northern hill, is a reasonably suitable edifice, and may be conveniently peopled by the imagination. I believe some part of it is ascribed to that extensive builder Cæsar.

The port is small, but very convenient, lying fairly embosomed in the town. The entrance is altogether artificial, but I saw no gates. I believe that vessels of some size may enter, though the trade is chiefly confined to the communication with France. The pier is a fine promenade of itself, and the whole of the public works connected with it, are solid and respectable. We glided quietly

into this little haven about one o'clock, and landed on the soil of old England once more.

If we were struck with the contrast between England and France, on first reaching the latter country, I think we were still more so on returning to the former. Four hours before we were in the region of politeness, vociferation, snatching, fun and fraud, on the quay of Calais; and now we were in that of quiet, sulkiness, extortion, thank'ees and half crowns, on that of Dover. It would be hard to say which was the worst, although, on the whole, one gets along best, I think, with the latter; for, provided he will pay, he gets his work done with the fewest words. The western people sometimes call a "rowdy" a "screamer," but they have nothing that deserves the name, in comparison with a true French *prolétaire*, who has his dinner still to earn. In England, a fellow will at least starve to death in silence.

We proceeded to Wrights' tavern, certainly one of the best in Dover, and it proved to be as unlike a French, or what an American inn would have been, in similar circumstances, as possible. The house was small, by no means as large as most of the village taverns at home, and altogether unworthy to be mentioned, as respects size, with the hotel we had just left, on the other side of the channel; but it was quiet and clean. I do not know that it was any cleaner than *Dessin's*, or a good American house, but the silent manner in

which the servants did their several duties, was, of itself, an indescribable luxury. At a thoroughfare like this, we should cause a huge pile to be reared, with cells for bed-rooms, a vast hall for a dining-room, and a kitchen fit for barracks, and with this *respublica* of a structure, the travellers, without remorse, would indiscriminately be elevated, or depressed, to the same level of habits; it being almost an offence against good morals, in *América*, for a man to refuse to be hungry when the majority is ravenous, or to have an appetite when the mass has dined. In the midst of noise and confusion, one would be expected to allow, that in such a caravansery, he was living in, what in American parlance, is called "splendid style." "Splendid misery" would be a better term, were not the use of the first term, as applied to a tasteless shell, absurd.

I have long thought that the regularity, silence, order, cleanliness, and *decencies* of an English inn, added to the beds, elegance, table, and liquors of a French inn, would form the *ne plus ultra* of inn-ism; and the house at Calais, which has, in some measure, become Anglicised by its position, goes to prove that the notion is not much out of the way. It quite puts its English competitor at Dover into the shade. We missed the mirrors, the service for the table, and the *manner*, but we got in their places a good deal of solid unpretending comfort.

While W—— went to the custom house, Mrs. —— and myself took a guide, and walked out to look at the cliffs. On one side the chalk rises like a wall, the houses clinging to its base, and, at this point, a shaft has been cut in it, containing a circular flight of steps, by which we ascended to the heights. This passage was made to facilitate the communications between the different military works. On quitting the stairs, we found ourselves on an irregular acclivity that forms the summit of the cliffs, and which was in grass. Of the perpendicular elevation, I should think about two-thirds of it was in the chalky precipices, looking towards the channel and the town, and the other third in the verdant cap on which we stood.

Here we found works of the modern school, consisting of the usual parapets, ditches, and glacis. The guide, who was anxious to show off his wares, led us up to a fort, into which we entered by a passage, from which he affirmed it was possible to abstract the air, a new device in warfare, and one that I should think rather supererogatory here, since the enemy that got as far as this gate at the *pas de charge*, would already be pretty short-winded. As we climbed, I more than once inquired, with old Gloster, "When shall we come to the top of that same hill." The honour of the invention was ascribed to the Duke of Wellington, by our companion, who was an old campaigner. But the military features were the least of the attrac-

tions of the spot. We were on the very cliffs of the “samphire gatherers :”—

—————“Half way down  
Hangs one that gathers samphire ; dreadful trade !  
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head :  
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,  
Appear like mice ; and yon tall anchoring bark  
Diminished to her cock ; her cock a buoy  
Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge,  
That on the unnumbered idle pebbles chafes,  
Cannot be heard so high.”

It is quite evident Edgar did not deal fairly with the old man, little of this fine description being more than poetically exact. After ascending to the summit of the height, which, without the stairs, could only be done from the rear, one would have to descend a long distance, across the verdant cap mentioned, in order to reach the verge of the cliffs.

Still the view was both imposing and beautiful. We overlooked the channel of course, and, for a few moments, we had a glimpse of the cliffs of France. Tall ships were stealing along the water, though neither their “cocks” nor “buoys” were visible. Dr. Johnson has complimented Shakspeare for his knowledge of nautical phrases, but this is a mistake into which neither you nor I will be so likely to fall. In the quotation I have just given you, the great bard makes the gradation in diminutiveness pass from the ship to her boat, and

from the boat to the buoy ! This is poetry, and as such it is above comment ; but one of the craft would have been more exact.

About a dozen years ago, I made an essay in nautical description, a species of writing that was then absolutely new. Anxious to know what the effect would be on the public, I read a chapter to our old shipmate —, now Captain —, which contained an account of a ship's working off-shore, in a gale. It had been my aim to avoid technicalities, in order to be poetic, although the subject imperiously required a minuteness of detail to render it intelligible. My listener betrayed interest, as we proceeded, until he could no longer keep his seat. He paced the room furiously until I got through, and just as I laid down the paper he exclaimed, "It is all very well, but you have let your jib stand too long, my fine fellow !" I blew it out of the bolt-rope, in pure spite.

The part of the view from the heights of Dover, which struck us as altogether the most unusual, was the inland. France, from Paris to Calais, was brown, and altogether without vegetation, while we now found England covered with a dark verdure that I had never before seen in February. In short, this country was much greener than when we left it, in July, 1826. It is true, the fields were not covered with the lively green of young grasses, but it had a dark, rich look, that conveyed the idea of a strong soil and of good husbandry

Something of this might have been owing to local causes, for I think the peculiarity was less observable nearer London, than on the coast.

The absence of wood would have left a sense of nakedness and sterility, but for the depth of the verdure. As it was, however, the whole district, visible from the heights, had a sort of Sunday air, like that of a comfortable mechanic, who was just shaved and attired for the day of rest. Few buildings appeared in the fields, and most of those we saw, the castle and public works excepted, singularly reminded us of the small, solid, unpretending but comfortable brick abodes, that one sees in New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware, rather than in any other part of America. This is just the section of the United States which most resembles the common English life, I think, and it is also the region in which the purest English is spoken. I believe it to be, on the whole, the nearest approach we have to England, in architecture, domestic habits and language, and I ascribe the fact to the circumstance, that this part of the Union was principally settled with emigrants from the midland counties of the mother country. I now refer, however, solely to the every-day rustic habits and usages.

We looked at this view of England with very conflicting sensations. It was the land of our fathers, and it contained, with a thousand things to induce us to love it, a thousand to chill the affections. Standing, as it might be, in the very portal



of the country, I imagined what was to occur in the next three months, with longing and distrust. Twenty-two years before, an ardent boy, I had leaped ashore, on the island, with a feeling of deep reverence and admiration, the fruits of the traditions of my people, and with a love almost as devoted as that I bore the land of my birth. I had been born, and I had hitherto lived, among those who looked up to England as to the idol of their political, moral, and literary adoration. These notions I had imbibed, as all imbibed them in America down even as late as the commencement of the last war. I had been accustomed to see every door thrown open to an Englishman, and to hear and think that his claim to our hospitality was that of a brother, divided from us merely by the accidents of position. Alas! how soon were these young and generous feelings blighted. I have been thrown much among Englishmen throughout the whole of my life, and for many I entertain a strong regard—one I even ranked among my closest friends—and I have personally received, in this kingdom itself, more than cold attentions; and yet among them all I cannot recall a single man, who, I have had the smallest reason to think, has ever given me his hand the more cordially and frankly because I was an American! With them, the tie of a common origin has seemed to be utterly broken, and when I have made friends, I have every reason to believe it has been in despite, and

in no manner in consequence, of my extraction. Other Americans tell me the same, and I presume no one enters the country from our side of the water, who has not first to overcome the prejudice connected with his birth, before he can meet the people on an equality with other strangers. We may have occasion to look into this matter before the next three months shall be passed.

On returning to the inn, we found that our effects were passed, at some little cost, and that we were expected to present ourselves, in person, at the alien office. This ceremony, far more exacting than any thing we had hitherto encountered in Europe, was not of a nature to make us feel at home. We went, however, even to the child, and were duly enregistered. I shall not take it on myself to say the form is unnecessary, for the police of two such towns as London and Paris must require great vigilance; but it had an ungracious appearance to compel a lady to submit to such a rule. We were treated with perfect civility, in all other respects, and, as the law was then new, it is possible its agent had interpreted its provisions too literally.

Mrs. — had also to pay a heavy duty on one or two of her dresses, although they formed part of her ordinary wardrobe. This regulation, however, might very well be necessary also, in the situation of the two countries, and it was not an easy matter to make an available distinction, in this respect,

between the natives of the country and mere travellers. I have had every reason to speak favourably of the English custom-houses, which, on all occasions, have manifested a spirit of liberality, and, in one or two instances, in which I have been a party, a generous and gentlemanlike feeling, that showed how well their officers understood the spirit of their duties. In my case, the revenue has never-lost a farthing by this temper, and both parties have been spared much useless trouble.

After dining, which was done without napkins, a change we instantly observed on coming from France, I made my arrangements to proceed. The French *calèche* had of course been left at Calais, but Mr. Wright gave me a regular post-coach, that held us very comfortably, together with the whole of the luggage. This vehicle differed but little from a stage coach, resembling what the *amateur* Jehus of London call a "drag."

As this equipage drove up to the door, we had, at once, a proof of the superiority of English over French travelling. The size and weight of the vehicle compelled me to order four horses, which appeared in the shape of so many blooded animals, a little galled in the withers, it is true, but in good heart, and which were under the management of two smart postillions, in top-boots, white hats, and scarlet jackets.

I inquired as to the condition of the roads. "Very bad, sir," exclaimed Mr. Wright, who had

a well-fed, contented air, without a particle of sulkiness about him—"quite rotten, sir." I was curious to see a rotten road. The word was given, and we moved off at a pace that did credit to the stables of Dover. The day was raw and windy, and the "boys," one of whom was fifty years old, got off at a turnpike, and concealed their finery under great coats. I took the opportunity to inquire when we should reach the "rotten roads," and was told that we were then on them. Occasionally the water lay on the surface, and cavities were worn an inch or two deep, and this was termed a rotten road! W—— laughed, and wondered what these fine fellows would think of a road in which "the bottom had fallen out," and of which we have so many in America.

The rate at which we moved did not appear very rapid, the whole team quite evidently travelling perfectly at their ease, and yet we did the distance between Dover and Canterbury, some sixteen miles, in about an hour and a-half. French cattle to do this, would have been on a cowish jump the whole time.

The road was quite narrow, following the natural windings of the ground, and, in all respects, its excellence excepted, resembled one of our own country roads. Indeed it is not usual to find so little space between the fences, as there was between the hedges of this great thoroughfare, most of the way. We passed a common or two, and a

race-course over an uneven track. The scenery was *petite*, if you can make out the meaning of such an expression, by which I would portray, narrow vales, low swells, and limited views. This, I think, is the prevailing character of English scenery, which owes its beauty to its finish, and a certain air of rural snugness and comfort, more than to any thing else. We missed the wood of France, for, at this season, the hedges are but an indifferent substitute.

We found Canterbury on a plain, and drove to another Mr. Wright's, for, to make a bad travelling pun, it was literally "all Wright," on this road. We had four of the name, including Dover and London. We ordered tea, and it was served redolent of home and former days. The hissing urn, the delicious toast, the fragrant beverage, the warm sea-coal fire, and the perfect snugness of every thing, were indeed grateful, after so many failures to obtain the same things in France. Commend me to a French breakfast, and to an English or an American "tea!"

## LETTER II.

TO CAPT. W. B. SHUBRICK, U. S. NAVY.\*

EARLY the following morning, on looking out of my window, I saw a gentleman in a scarlet coat, and a hunting-cap, mounting in the yard of the inn. He had been hunting the previous day, and had evidently made a night of it. Soon after we went to look at the metropolitan church of England. Canterbury itself is a place of no great magnitude, but it is neat. Coming from France the houses struck us as being diminutively low, though they are very much the same sort of buildings one sees in the country towns of the older parts of the middle states. Burlington, Trenton, Wilmington, Bristol, Chester, &c. &c., will give you a very accurate idea of one of these small provincial towns, as will Baltimore, its night-caps apart, of one of the larger. It is usual to say that Boston is more like an English town, than any other place in America, but I should say that the resemblance is stronger in Baltimore, as a whole, and in Philadelphia, in parts. There are entire quarters of the latter town,

which, were it not for their extreme regularity, might be taken for parts of London, though there are others which are quite peculiar to Philadelphia itself. As for New-York, it is a perfect rag-fair, in which the tawdry finery of ladies of easy virtue, is exposed, in the same stall, and in close proximity to the greasy vestments of the pauper.

As we walked through the streets of Canterbury, I directed the attention of my companions to the diminutive stature of the people. I feel certain that the average height of the men we have met since landing, is fully an inch below that of one of our own towns. And yet we were in the heart of Kent, a county that the English say contains the finest race of the island. Though short, and not particularly sturdy, the people had a decent air, that is wanting in the French of the same classes, with all their *manner*. Mrs. ——— was delighted with this peculiarity in her own sex, which strongly reminded her of home. Even the humblest wore some sort of a hat in the streets, and a large proportion wore those scarlet cloaks that used to be so common among the farmer's wives in America. In this particular, the common people had the appearance of having adhered to fashions that our own population dropped some forty years since.

The cathedral of Canterbury is a fine church, without being one of the best of its class. It is neither as large nor as rich as some others in England, even, and in both respects, it is much in-

ferior to many on the continent. Still it is large and noble, its length exceeding five hundred feet. Like all the great English churches, this cathedral is free from the miserable adjuncts that clerical cupidity has stuck against the walls of similar edifices, in France. It stands isolated from all other buildings, with grass growing prettily up to its very walls. This, of itself, was a great charm, compared to the filthy pavements, and the garbage that is apt to defile the temple, on the other side of the channel.

We found the officials at morning prayers, in the choir. It sounded odd to us, to hear our own beautiful service, in our own tongue, in such a place, after the Latin chants of the deep-mouthed canons, and we stood listening with reverence, although without the skreen. These English cathedrals maintain so much of the Romish establishments as still to possess their chapters, but instead of the ancient cloisters, the protestants having wives, there is a sort of square of snug houses around the edifice, for the residences of the prebendaries and other officials. I believe this is called a *close*, a word that we do not use, but which has the same signification as place, or *cul de sac*, not being a thoroughfare. Perhaps the term *close fellow* came from these churchmen; no bad etymology, since it has a direct reference to the pocket. It has always been matter of astonishment to me, that a man of liberal attainments should possess one of these clerical sine-



cures, grow sleek and greasy on its products, eat, drink, and be merry, and fancy, all the while, that he was serving God! Men become accustomed to any absurdity. Were Christ to reappear on earth, and preach again his doctrine of self-denial and humility, he who should attempt to practice on his tenets, according to modern notions would be regarded as not only a fool himself, but as believing others weak as himself; but time has hallowed the abuses that were begotten by cupidity on ignorance.

The cathedral of Canterbury was the scene of Becket's murder. His shrine was here, and for centuries, it was the resort of pilgrims. It merited canonization to be slain at the horns of the altar. The building still contains many curious reliicks of this nature, but mere descriptions of such things, are usually very unsatisfactory.

After passing most of the morning exploring, and taking a tea breakfast, *à l' Anglaise*, we proceeded. The road took us through Rochester, Sittingbourne, Chatham, the edge of Woolwich, and Gravesend. The distance was fifty-five miles, and we passed at least five towns, which contained, on an average, ten thousand souls. Although the day was windy and raw, I stuck to the box the whole time, preferring to encounter the marrow-chilling weather of an English February, to missing the objects that came within our view. In the course of the morning we saw a party of horsemen,

with a pack of hounds, dashing through a turnip field, but what they were after could not be seen.

^ You probably know that a principal naval station is at Sheerness, on the Medway. We did not pass immediately through this town, though Chatham forms almost a part of it. The river was full of ships, as was the Thames in a reach above Gravesend. Most of the vessels in the latter place, were frigates. They lay in tiers, and appeared to be well cared for. These ships were chiefly of the class of the old thirty-eights, or vessels that we call thirty-sixes, mounting eight-and-twenty eighteens below, and two-and-twenty lighter guns above.

It may be known to you, that after our last war, the English admiralty altered its mode of rating. The old thirty-eights are now called forty-sixes, though why, it is not easy to see. The pretext that we under-rated our ships, because we did not number the guns, is absurd, since we derived the usage directly from the English themselves; nor do their changes meet the difficulty, as no large vessel is now probably rated exactly according to her armament. The number of the guns, moreover, is no criterion of the force of a vessel, since the metal and powers of endurance make all the difference in the world. An old-fashioned English thirty-two, mounted twenty-six twelves below, with as many light guns as she could conveniently carry on her quarter-deck and forecastle, differing from the thirty-six merely in the weight of metal,

which in the latter was that of eighteens. I have seen a thirty-two that carried as many guns as a thirty-six, and yet the latter was at least a fourth heavier, if not a third. Fetches of this nature, are every way unworthy of two such navies as those England and America, nor can they mislead any but the extremely ignorant. In my estimation the Duke of Wellington deserves more credit for the frank simplicity of his account of the battles he has fought, than for the victories he has gained; other men having been successful as well as himself, though few, indeed, are they who have been content with the truth.

It is a point of honour with the post-boys, on an English road, to pass all the stage coaches. For this purpose they use cattle of a different mould; animals that possess foot rather than force. The loads are lighter, usually, and in this manner they are able to carry their point. I was pleased with the steady, quiet, earnest, manner in which this essential object was always attained, every thing like the appearance of strife and racing being studiously avoided.

The terrible Shooter's Hill offered no longer any terrors, and as for Blackheath, it had more the air of a village green than of a waste. The goodness of the roads, the fleetness of the cattle, and, more than all, the system of credits, have rendered highwaymen and footpads almost unknown in England. Robberies of this nature are now much more fre-

quent in France than in this island, for several flagrant instances have lately occurred in the former country. A single footpad is said to have rifled a *diligence*, sustained by a platoon of *paddies*, armed with sticks, and arrayed by moonlight! The story is so absurd, that one wishes it may be true.

In travelling along these beautiful roads, at the rate of ten or eleven miles the hour, in perfect security, we are irresistibly led to recall the pictures of Fielding, with his carriers, his motley cargoes, and his footpads!

London met us, in its straggling suburbs, several miles down the river. I cannot give you any just idea of our *carte de route*, but it led us through a succession of streets lined by houses of dingy yellow bricks, until we suddenly burst out upon Waterloo Bridge. Crossing this huge pile, we whirled into the Strand, and were set down at the hotel of Mrs. Wright, Adam street, Adelphi. Forty years since we should have been in the very focus of the fashionable world, so far as hotels were concerned, whereas we were now at its *Ultima Thule*. The Strand, as its name signifies, runs parallel to the river, and at no great distance from its banks, leaving room, however, for a great number of short streets between it and the water. Nearly all these streets, most of which are in fact "places," having no outlets at one end, are filled with furnished lodging-houses, and, in some of the best of them, I believe it is still permitted to a gentleman to re-

side. When, however, I mentioned to a friend that we were staying in Adam street, he exclaimed that we ought, on no account, to have gone east of Charing Cross. These were distinctions that gave us very little concern, and we were soon refreshing ourselves with some of worthy Mrs. Wright's excellent tea.

One of the merits of England is the perfect order in which every thing is kept, and the perfect method with which every thing is done. One sees no cracked cups, no tea-pots with broken noses, no knives thin as wafers, no forks with one prong longer than the other, no coach wanting a glass, no substitute for a buckle, no crooked poker or tongs loose in the joint, no knife that wont cut, no sugar cracked in lumps too big to be used, no hat unbrushed, no floor with a hole in it, no noisy servants, no bell that wont ring, no window that wont open, no door that wont shut, no broken pane, nor any thing out of repair that might have been mended. I now speak of the eyes of him who can pay. In France, half of these incongruities are to be met with amid silken curtains and broad mirrors, though France is rapidly improving in this respect ; but, at home, we build on a huge scale, equip with cost, and take refuge in expedients as things go to decay. We are not as bad as the Irish are said to be, in this respect, but he who insists on having things precisely as they ought to be, is usually esteemed a most unreasonable rogue, more es-

pecially in the interior. We satisfy ourselves by acknowledging a standard of merit in comforts, but little dream of acting up to it. We want servants, and mechanical labour is too costly. The low price at which comforts are retailed here, has greatly surprised me. I feel persuaded that most of the common articles of English manufacture come to the consumer in America, at about thrice their original cost.

The second night we were in London, a party of street musicians came under the window and began to play. They had tried several tunes without success, for I was stretched on a sofa reading, but the rogues contrived, after all, to abstract half a crown from my pocket, by suddenly striking up *Yankee Doodle!* It is something, at all events, to have taught John Bull that we take pride in that tune. You can scarcely imagine the effect it produced on my nerves to hear it in the streets of London, though you and I have heard it "rolling off for grog" so often with perfect indifference. I have since been told by a music-master, that the air is German. He touched it for me, though with a time and cadence that completely changed its character. The English took the tune of an old song beginning with "Miss Nancy Locket lost her pocket," and adapted their words of derision to it; but there is strictly no such thing as an English school of music. Most of their songs, I believe,

have the *motives* of German airs. The prevalent *motive* of all English music, however, is gold.

I cannot tell you how many furnished apartments and lodging-houses London contains, but the number is incredible. They can be had at all prices, and with nearly every degree of comfort and elegance. The rush of people to town is so great, during the season, that there are periods when it is not easy to have a choice, notwithstanding, though we were sufficiently early to make a selection. In one thing I was disappointed. The English unquestionably are a neat people, in all that relates to their houses, and yet the furnished lodgings of London are not generally as tidy as those of Paris. The general use of coal may be a reason, but after passing a whole day in examining rooms, we scarcely met with any that appeared sufficiently neat. The next morning I tried a new quarter, where we did a little better, though the effects of the coal-dust met us everywhere.

We finally took a small house in St. James's Place, a narrow *inlet* that communicates with the street of the same name, and which is quite near the palace and the parks. We had a tiny drawing-room, quite plainly furnished, a dining-room, and three bed-rooms, with the use of the offices, &c., for a guinea a-day. The people of the house cooked for us, went to market, and attended to the rooms, while our own man and maid did the personal service. I paid a shilling extra for each fire, and as

we kept three, it came to another guinea weekly. This, you will remember, was during the season, as it is called ; at another time the same house might have been had, quite possibly, for half the money.

Many people take these furnished houses by the year, and more still, by the quarter. I was surprised to find those in our neighbourhood gradually filling with people of condition, many of the coaches that daily stood before their doors having coronets. Perhaps more than half of the peers of the three kingdoms lodge in this way when in town, and I believe a smaller proportion still actually own the houses in which they reside. Even in those cases in which the head of a great family has a town-house of his own, the heir and younger children, if married, seldom reside in it, the English customs, in this respect, being just the reverse of those of France.

There is a great convenience in having it in one's power to occupy a house that is in all respects private, ready furnished, and to come and go at will. Were the usage introduced into our own towns, hundreds of families would be induced to pass their winters in them, that now remain in the country from aversion to the medley and confusion of a hotel, or a boarding-house, as well as their expense. We have a double advantage for the establishment of such houses, in New York at least, in the fact that we have two seasons, yearly, the winter and the summer. Our own people would occupy them



during the former portion of the year, and the southern travellers in the warm weather. The introduction of such houses would, I think, have a beneficial influence on our deportment, which is so fast tending towards mediocrity, under the present gregarious habits of the people. When there is universal suffrage at a dinner-table, or in the drawing-room, numbers will prevail, as well as in the ballot-boxes, and the majority in no country is particularly polite and well bred. The great taverns that are springing up all over America, are not only evils in the way of comfort and decency, but they are actually helping to injure the tone of manners. They are social Leviathans.

## LETTER III.

TO RICHARD COOPER, ESQ. COOPERSTOWN, N. Y.

A LONDON season lasts during the regular session of parliament, unless politics contrive to weary dissipation. Of course this rule is not absolute, as the two houses are sometimes unexpectedly convened; but the ordinary business of the country usually begins after the Christmas holidays, and, allowing for a recess at Easter, continues until June, or July. This division of time seems unnatural to us, but all national usages of the sort, can commonly be traced to sufficient causes. The shooting and hunting seasons occupy the autumn and early winter months; the Christmas festivities follow; then the country in England, apart from its sports, is less dreary in winter than in most other parts of the world, the verdure being perhaps finer than in the warm months, and London, which is to the last degree unpleasant as a residence from November to March, is most agreeable from April to June. The government is exclusively in the hands of the higher classes, or, so nearly so as to render their

convenience and pleasure the essential point, and these inhabit a quarter of the town, in which one misses the beauties of the country far less than in most capitals. The west end is so interspersed with parks and gardens and the enclosures of squares, that, aided by high culture and sheltered positions, vegetation not only comes forward earlier in Westminster than in the adjacent fields, but it is more grateful to the eye and feelings. The men are much on horseback of a morning, and the women take their drives in the parks, quite as agreeably as if they were at their own country residences.

The season has gradually been growing later, I believe, though Bath of old, and Brighton and Cheltenham, and other watering places of late, attracted, or still attract the idler, in the commencement of the winter. Since the peace, the English have much frequented the continent, after June; Paris, the German watering places, and Switzerland being almost as easy of access as their own houses. It is made matter of reproach against the upper classes of England, that they spend so much of their time abroad, but, without adverting to the dearness of living at home, and the factitious state of society, both of which are strong inducements to multitudes to quit the island, I fancy we should do the same thing were we cooped up, in a country so small, and with roads so excellent that it could be traversed from one end to the other in eight and

forty hours, having the exchanges always in our own favour, and with an easy access to novel and amusing scenes. Travelling never truly injured any one, and it has sensibly meliorated the English character.

A day or two after our arrival in London, an English friend asked me if I were not struck with the crowds in the streets; particularly with the confusion of the carriages. Coming from Paris I certainly was not, for, during the whole of March, the movement, if any thing, was in favour of the French capital.

As usual, I came to London without a letter. It may be an error, but on this point I have never been able to overcome a repugnance to making these direct appeals for personal attentions. In the course of my life, I do not think, much as I have travelled, that I have delivered half a dozen. I am fully aware of their necessity if one would be noticed, but, right or wrong, I have preferred to be unnoticed to laying an imposition on others that they may possibly think onerous. The unreflecting and indelicate manner in which the practice of giving and asking for letters is abused, in America, may have contributed to my disgust at the usage. Just before I left home, a little incident occurred, connected with the subject, that, in no degree, served to diminish this reluctance to asking favours and civilities of strangers. I happened to be present when an improper application was made to the son of one of

our ministers in Europe, for letters to the father. Surprised that such a request should be granted, I was explicitly told that a private sign had been agreed upon, between the parties, whereby all applicants should be gratified, though none were really to have the benefit of the introduction but those who bore the stipulated mark! This odious duplicity, had its rise in the habits of a country, in which men are so apt to mistake their privileges. The practice of deferring leads to frauds in politics, and to hypocrisy in morals. Some will tell you this case was the fruits of democracy, but I shall say it savoured more of an artifice of aristocracy, and such, in fact, was the political bias of both father and son. Democracy merits no other reproach in the affair, than the weakness of allowing itself to be deceived by agents so hollow.

I had made the acquaintance of Mr. William Spencer, in Paris, a gentleman well known in England as the author of "A Year of Sorrow," and several very clever pieces of fugitive poetry. Hearing that I was about to visit London, he volunteered to give me letters to a large circle of acquaintances, literary and fashionable. Pleading my retired habits, I endeavoured to persuade him not to give himself the trouble of writing, but, mistaking the motive, he insisted on showing this act of kindness. Trusting to his known indolence, I thought little of the matter, until the very morning of the day we left Paris, when this gentleman appeared, and, instead of the letters, he gave me a list of the names

of some of those he wished me to know, desiring me to leave cards for them, on reaching London, in the full assurance that the letters would be sent after me! I put the list in my pocket, and, as you will readily imagine, thought the arrangement sufficiently queer. The list contained, however, the names of several whom I would gladly have known, could it be done with propriety, including, among others, those of Rogers, Campbell, Sotheby, Lord Tindley, &c. &c.

Under these circumstances, I took quiet possession of the house in St. James's Place, with no expectation of seeing any part of what is called society, content to look at as much of the English capital as could be viewed on the outside, and to pursue my own occupations. This arrangement was rendered the less to be regretted by the circumstance that we had been met in London, by the unpleasant intelligence of the death of Mr. de ——. Of course it was the wish of your aunt to be retired. While things were in this state, I went one morning to a bookseller's, where the Americans are in the habit of resorting, and learned, to my surprise, that several of the gentlemen named on Mr. Spenser's list, had been there to inquire for me. This looked as if he had actually written, and to this kindness on his part, and to an awkward mistake, by which I was supposed to be the son of an Englishman of the same name and official appellation as those of your grand-father, I am indebted to nearly

all of the acquaintances I made in England, some of whom I should have been extremely sorry to have missed.

The first visit I had, out of our own narrow circle of Americans, occurred about a fortnight after we were established in St. James's Place. I was writing at the time, and did not attend particularly when the name was announced, but supposing it was some tradesman, I ordered the person to be admitted. A quiet little old man appeared in the room, and we stood staring near a minute at each other, he, as I afterwards understood, to ascertain if he could discover any likeness between me and my supposed father, and I wondering who the diminutive little personage might be. I question if the stature of my visitor much exceeded five feet, though his frame was solid and heavy. He was partly bald, and the hair that remained was perfectly white. He had a fine head, a benevolent countenance, and a fresh colour. After regarding me a moment, and perceiving my doubt, he said simply—"I am Mr. Godwin. I knew your father, when he lived in England, and hearing that you were in London, I have come, without ceremony, to see you." After expressing my gratification at having made his acquaintance on any terms, I gave him to understand there was some mistake, as my father had never been out of America. This led to an explanation, when he took his seat and we began to chat. He was curious to hear something of

American literature, which I have soon discovered is very little known in England. He wished to learn, in particular, if we had any poets—"I have seen something of Dwight's and Humphrey's, and Barlow's," he said, "but I cannot say that either pleased me much." I laughed and told him we could do better than that, now. He begged me to recite something—a single verse, if possible. He could not have applied to a worse person, for my memory barely suffices to remember facts, of which I trust it is sufficiently tenacious, but I never could make any thing of a quotation. As he betrayed a childish eagerness to hear even half a dozen lines, I attempted something of Bryant's, and a little of Alnwick Castle, which pretty much exhausted my whole stock. I was amused at the simplicity with which he betrayed the little reverence he felt for our national intellect, for it was quite apparent he thought "nothing good could come out of Nazareth."

Mr. Godwin sat with me an hour, and the whole time the conversation was about America, her prospects, her literature, and her politics. It was not possible to believe that he entertained a favorable opinion of the country, notwithstanding the liberal tendency of his writings, for prejudice, blended with a few shrewd and judicious remarks, peeped out of all his notions. He had almost a rustic simplicity of manner, that, I think, must be as much attributed to the humble sphere of life in



which he had lived, as to character, for the portion of his deportment which was not awkward seemed to be the result of mind, while the remainder might easily enough be traced to want of familiarity with life. At least, so both struck me, and I can only give you my impressions. As Mr. Godwin has long enjoyed a great reputation, and the English of rank are in the habit of courting men of letters, (though certainly in a way peculiar to themselves) I can only suppose that the tendency of his writings, which is not favorable to aristocracy, has prevented him from enjoying the usual advantages of men of celebrity.

It would savour of empiricism to pretend to dive into the depths of character, in an interview of an hour, but there was something about the manner of Mr. Godwin that strongly impressed me with the sincerity of his philosophy, and of his real desire to benefit his race. I felt several times, during his visit, as if I wished to pat the old man's bald head, and tell him "he was a good fellow." Indeed, I cannot recall any one, who, on so short an acquaintance, so strongly impressed me with a sense of his philanthropy; and this too, purely from externals, for his professions and language were totally free from cant. This opinion forced itself on me, almost in spite of my wishes, for Mr. Godwin so clearly viewed us with any thing but favourable eyes, that I could not consider him a friend. He regarded us a *speculating* rather

than as a *speculative* people, and such is not the character that a philosopher most esteems.

I returned the visit of Mr. Godwin, in a few days, although I was indebted to his presence to a mistake, and found him, living in great simplicity, in the midst of his books. On this occasion he manifested the peculiarities already named, with the same disposition to distrust the greatness of the "twelve millions." I fancy my father has not sent him very good accounts of us.

A few days later I got an invitation to be present at an evening party, given by a literary man, with whom I had already a slight acquaintance. On this occasion, I was told a lady known a little in the world of letters, was desirous of making my acquaintance, and, of course, I had only to go forward and be presented. "I had the pleasure of knowing your father," she observed, as soon as my bow was made.—Forgetting Mr. Godwin and his visit, I observed that she had then been in America. Not at all ; she had known my father in England. I then explained to her that I was confounded with another person, my father being an American, and never out of his own country. This news produced an extraordinary change on the countenance and manner of my new acquaintance, who, from that moment, did not deign to speak to me, or hardly to look at me ! As her first reception had been quite frank and warm, and she herself had sought the introduction, I thought this deportment a little

decided. I cannot explain the matter, in any other way, than by supposing that her inherent dislike of America suddenly got the better of her good manners, for the woman could hardly expect that I was to play impostor for her particular amusement. This may seem to you extraordinary, but I have seen many similar and equally strong instances of national antipathy betrayed by these people, since my residence in Europe. I note these things, as matter of curious observation.

In the course of the same week I was indebted to the attention of Mr. Spencer for another visit, which led to more agreeable consequences. The author of the *Pleasures of Memory* was my near neighbour in St. James's Place, and, induced by Mr. Spencer, he very kindly sought me out. His visit was the first I actually received from the "list," and it has been the means of my seeing most of what I have seen, of the interior of London. It was followed by an invitation to breakfast for the following morning.

I certainly have no intention to repay Mr. Rogers for his many acts of kindness, by making him and his friends the subject of my comments, but, to a certain degree he must pay the penalty of celebrity, and neither he nor any one else has a right to live in so exquisite a house, and expect every body to hold their tongues about it.

It was but a step from my door to that of Mr. Rogers, and you may be certain I was punctual to

the appointed hour. I found with him Mr. Carey, the translator of Dante, and his son. The conversation during breakfast was general. The subject of America being incidentally introduced. Our host told many literary anecdotes, in a quiet and peculiar manner that gave them point. I was asked if the language of America differed essentially from that of England. I thought not so much in words and pronunciation, as in intonation and in the signification of certain terms. Still I thought I could always tell an Englishman from an American, in the course of five minutes' conversation. The two oldest gentlemen professed not to be able to discover any thing in my manner of speaking to betray me for a foreigner, but the young gentleman fancied otherwise. "He thought there was something peculiar—provincial—he did not know what exactly." I could have helped him to the word—"something that was not cockney." The young man however was right in the main, for I could myself have pronounced that all three of my companions were not Americans, and I do not see why they might not have said that I was no Englishman. The difference between the enunciation of Mr. Rogers and Mr. Carey and one of our educated men of the middle states, it is true, was scarcely perceptible, and required a nice ear and some familiarity with both countries to detect, but the young man could not utter a sentence, without showing his origin.

Mr. Rogers had the good nature to let me see his house, after breakfast. It stands near the head of the place, there being a right-angle between his dwelling and mine, and its windows, in the rear, open on the Green Park. In every country in which men begin to live for enjoyment and taste, it is a desideratum to get an abode that is not exposed to the noise and bustle of a thoroughfare. One who has intellectual resources, and elegant accomplishments, in which to take refuge, scarcely desires to be a street gazer, and I take it to be almost a test of the character of a population, when its higher classes seek to withdraw from publicity, in this manner. One can conceive of a trader who has grown rich wishing to get a "good stand," even for a house, but I am now speaking of men of cultivated minds and habits.

On this side of the Green Park there is no street between the houses and the field. The buildings stand in a line, even with the place on one side, and having small gardens between them and the park. Of course, all the good rooms overlook the latter. The Green Park, and St. James's Park, are, in fact, one open space, the separation between them being merely a fence. The first is nothing but a large field, cropped down like velvet, irregularly dotted with trees, and without any carriage way. Paths wind naturally across it, cows graze before the eye, and nursery maids and children sprinkle its uneven surface, whenever the day is

fine. There is a house and garden belonging to the ranger, on one of its sides, and the shrubbery of the latter, as well as that of the small private gardens just mentioned, help to relieve the nakedness. I should think there must be sixty or eighty acres in the Green Park, while St. James's is much larger. On one side the Green Park is open to Piccadilly; on another it is bounded by a carriage way in St. James's; a third joins St. James's, and the fourth is the end on which stands the house of Mr. Rogers.

It strikes me the dwellings which open on these two parks, (for more than half of St. James's Park is bounded by houses in the same manner) are the most desirable in London. They are central as regards the public edifices, near the court, the clubs, and the theatres, and yet they are more retired than common. The carriage way to them is almost always by places, or silent streets, while their best windows overlook a beautiful rural scene interspersed with the finer parts of a capital. As a matter of course, these dwellings are in great request. On the side of the Green Park is the residence of Sir Francis Burdett, Spenser-house, Bridgewater-house, so celebrated for its pictures, and many others of a similar quality, while a noble new palace stands at the point where the two parks meet, that was constructed for the late Duke of York, then heir presumptive of the crown.

The house of Mr. Rogers is a *chef d'œuvre* for

the establishment of a bachelor. I understood him to say that it occupied a part of the site of a dwelling of a former Duke of St. Albans, and so well is it proportioned that I could hardly believe it to be as small as feet and inches demonstrate. Its width cannot be more than eighteen feet, while its depth may a little exceed fifty. The house in which we lodge is even smaller. But the majority of the town-houses, here, are by no means distinguished for their size. Perhaps the average of the genteel lodging houses, of which I have spoken, is less than that of Mr. Rogers's dwelling.

This gentleman has his drawing-room and dining-room lined with pictures, chiefly by the old masters. Several of them are the studies of larger works. His library is filled with valuable books; curiosities, connected principally with literature, history, and the arts, are strewn about the house, and even some rare relics of Egyptian sculpture find a place in this tasteful abode. Among other things of the sort, he has the original agreement for the sale of *Paradise Lost*! The price, I believe, was twenty-five pounds. It is usual to rail at this meanness, but I question if there is a bookseller, now in London, who would pay as much for it.

I was much interested with a little circumstance connected with these rarities. In the drawing-room stands a precious antique vase, on a handsome pedestal of carved wood. Chantry was

dining with the poet, as a group collected around the spot, to look at the vase. "Do you know who did this carving?" asked the sculptor, laying his hand on the pedestal. Mr. Rogers mentioned the carver he employed. "Yes, yes, he had the job, but *I* did the *work*,"—being then an apprentice, or a journeyman, I forget which.



## LETTER IV.

TO THOMAS JAMES DE LANCEY, ESQUIRE.

I SHALL not entertain you with many cockney descriptions of "sights." By this time England, in these particulars, is better understood with us, than in points much more essential. Whenever I do diverge from the track prescribed to myself, with such an object, it will be to point out something peculiar, or to give you what I conceive will be juster notions than those you may have previously imbibed. Still, one can hardly visit London without saying something of its *matériel*, and I shall take this occasion to open the subject.

As your — had never before been in London, and might never be again, it became a sort of duty to examine the principal objects, one of the first of which was Westminster Abbey. I have already spoken of the exterior of this building, and shall now add a word of its interior.

The common entrance is by a small door, at the Poet's Corner; and it was a strange sensation to find one's self in the midst of tablets bearing the

epitaphs of most of those whose names are hallowed in English literature, and English art. I can only liken it to the emotion one might feel in unexpectedly finding himself in a room with most of his distinguished contemporaries. It was startling to see such names as Shakspeare, and Milton, and Ben Jonson, even on a tomb-stone; and, albeit little given to ultra romanticism, I felt a thrilling of the nerves as I read them. The abbey is well filled with gorgeous monuments of the noble and politically great, but they are collected in different chapels, on the opposite side of the church, or beneath its nave, while the intellectual spirits are crowded together, in a sort of vestibule; as if entering, one by one, and finding good companions already assembled, they had stopped in succession to enjoy each other's society. Notwithstanding the gorgeous pomp of the monuments of the noble, one feels that this homely corner contains the best company. Westminster Abbey, in my judgment, is a finer church internally than on its exterior. Still it has great faults, wanting unity, and an unobstructed view. It has a very neat and convenient choir, in which the regular service is performed, and which bears some such proportion to the whole interior, as the chancel of an ordinary American church bears to its whole inside. It stands, as usual, in a range with the transept. This choir, however, breaks the line of sight, and impairs the grandeur of the aisles.

The celebrated chapel of Henry VIIth, like the body of the church itself, is finer even internally than externally, although its exterior is truly a rare specimen of the gothic. The stalls of the Knights of the Bath are in this chapel, and its beautiful vaulted roof is darkened by a cloud of banners, time worn and dingy. This is a noble order of chivalry, for its rolls contain but few names that are not known to history. Unlike the Legion of Honour, which is now bestowed on all who want it, and the Garter, an institution that owes all its distinction to the convention of hereditary rank, the Knights of the Bath commonly earn their spurs by fair and honourable service, in prominent and responsible stations, before they are permitted to wear them. There always will be some favouritism in the use of political patronage, but, I am inclined to think there never was an order of chivalry instituted, or indeed any other mode of distinction devised, in which merit and not favour has more uniformly controlled the selections, than in bestowing the red ribbands. The greatest evil of such rewards arises from the fact that men will not be satisfied with simply making a distinction of merit, but they invariably rear on a foundation so plausible, other and more mystified systems, in which there is an attempt to make a merit of distinctions.

Among the laboured monuments of the Abbey is one in honour of Admiral Sir Peter Warren, who died Rear Admiral of England, some seventy years

ago, erected by his wife. Lady Warren was a native of New York, and a member of your own family; having been the sister of your father's grandfather. Her husband was a long time commander in chief on our coast, and was known in our history as one of the conquerors of Louisbourg. He was a good officer, and is said to have done most of the fighting on the occasion of Anson's victory, commanding the van-squadron. On his return, the worthy citizens of London were so much captivated with his bravery, that they offered to make him an alderman! Sir Peter Warren was also the uncle of Sir William Johnson, and this celebrated person first appeared in the interior of our country, as the agent of his relative, who then owned an estate on the Mohawk, at a place that is still called Warrensbush.

As a whole, there is little to be said in favour of the much-talked-of monuments of Westminster Abbey. Most of them want simplicity and distinctness, telling their stories badly, and some of the most pretending among them are vile conceits. There are some good details, however, and a few of the statues of more recent erection, are works of merit. A statue of Mr. Horner by Chantry is singularly noble, although in the modern attire. The works of this artist strike me as having all the merit that can exist independently of the ideal. The monuments are very numerous; for any person, of reasonable pretensions, who chooses to pay for

the privilege, can have one erected for a friend, though I fancy, the poet's corner is held to be a little more sacred. It is much the fashion of late, to place the monuments of distinguished men in St. Pauls.

You have heard that the heads of Washington and the other American officers, which are on a *bas relief* of André's monument, have been knocked off. This fact of itself furnishes proof of the state of feeling here, as respects us, but an answer of our cicerone, when showing us the church, gives still stronger evidence of it. "Why have they done this?" I demanded, curious to hear the history of the injury. "Oh! sir, there are plenty of evil-disposed people get in here. *Some American* has done it, no doubt." So you perceive we are not only accused of hanging our enemies, but of beheading our friends!

In a room, up a flight of steps, is a small collection of figures in wax, bedizened with tinsel, and every way worthy of occupying a booth at Bartholemew's fair. It is impossible for me to tell you what has induced the dean and chapter, to permit this prostitution of their venerable edifice, but it is reasonable to suppose that it is the very motive which induced Ananias to lie, and Sapphira to swear to it. These crude and coarse tastes are constantly encountering one in England, and, at first, I felt disposed to attribute it to the circumstance of a low national standard, but, perhaps it

were truer to say that the lower orders of this country, by being more at their ease, and by *paying* for their gratifications of this nature, produce an influence on all public exhibitions that is unfelt on the Continent, where the spectacle being intended solely for the intellectual is better adapted to their habits. As connected with religious superstition, moreover, the finest cathedrals of all Catholic countries enjoy monstrosities almost as bad as these of the Abbey.

There are many old monuments in Westminster, which, without possessing a particle of merit in the way of the arts, are very curious by their conceits, and as proofs of the tastes of our forefathers. Truly, there is little to be said in favour of the latter, it being quite evident that, as a nation, England was never so near the golden age, in every thing connected with intellect, as at this moment. Hitherto, nearly all her artists of note, have been foreigners, but now she is getting a school of her own, and one that, sustained by her wealth and improved by travelling, bids fair shortly to stand at the head of them all.

Westminster Abbey, exclusively of Henry VIIth's Chapel, which scarcely appears to belong to the edifice, although attached to it, is by no means either a very rich, or a very large, edifice of its kind. Still it is a noble structure, and its principal fault, to my eye, is that pinched and mean appearance of its towers, to which I have else-

where alluded, externally; and internally the manner in which it is broken into parts. The chapels have a cupboard character, that well befits English snugness. The greatest charms of the Abbey are its recollections and its precious memorials of the mighty dead. As respects the latter, I should think it quite without a rival, but you must look elsewhere for descriptions of them. In travelling through Europe, one is occasionally startled by meeting the name of Erasmus, or Galileo, or Dante, or of some other immortalised by his genius; but these monuments are scattered not only in different countries and cities, but often in the different churches of the same place. There is moreover a homely air and a rustic simplicity, here, in the quiet, unpretending stones, that line the walls and flagging of the Poet's Corner, and which almost induce one to believe that he is actually treading the familiar haunts of the illustrious dead. The name of Shakspeare struck me as familiarly as if I had met it beneath a yew, in a country churchyard.

On leaving the Abbey we went to look at the Parliament-Houses, and Westminster Hall. These buildings are grouped together, on the other side of the street, lying on the banks of the river. They form a quaint and confused pile, though, coupled with their eventful history, their present uses, and some portions of architectural beauty and singularity, one of great interest. Now, that my eye

has become accustomed to Gothic cathedrals, I find myself looking at the Hall, with more feeling, than even at the old church.

Westminster Hall is the oldest and finest part of the pile. It dates from the time of William II., though it has been much improved and altered since, especially about the year 1400. Its style may be properly referred to the latter period, though, the rude magnificence of the thought, perhaps, better comports with the former. You know it was intended as the banqueting hall of a palace. When we remember that this room is two hundred and seventy feet long, ninety high, and seventy-four wide, we are apt to conceive sublime things of the state of an ancient monarch. But, it is all explained by the usages of the times. The hall, or knight's hall, in the smaller baronial residences, was more than half the dwelling. In some instances, it was literally the whole of one floor of the tower, the recesses of the windows being used as bed chambers at night. Although we have no records of the time when the English nobles lived in this primitive manner, it is reasonable to suppose that they did no better, for that civilization which is now so perfect, is far from being the oldest of Europe.

These halls were formerly appropriated to the purposes of the whole establishment, the noble and his dependents using the same room and the same table, making the distinction of, "the salt." Then a



court, at which the courtier invariably appeared with a train of armed followers, had need of space, not only to entertain those who came to protect their lords, but those who were present to see they did no violence.

If one gets a magnificent idea of the appliances of royalty from this hall, he gets no very exalted one of the comforts of the period. The side walls are of naked stone, there is no floor, or pavement, and bating its quaint gothic wildness, the roof has a strong affinity to that of a barn. On great occasions it requires a good deal of dressing, to make the place, in the least, like a room. A part of it, just then, was filled with common board *shantys*, which, we were told, were full of records, and a line of doors on one side, communicates with the courts of law.

It is said that Westminster Hall is the largest room in Europe, that is unsupported by pillars, the roof being upheld by the ordinary gothic knees, or brackets. This may be true, though the great hall of the Stadt House, at Amsterdam, and that of the Palazzo Gran Duca at Florence, both struck me as finer rooms. There is also a hall at Padua which I prefer, and which I think is larger, and there are many in the Low Countries, that, on the whole, would well compare with this. The great gallery of Versailles, the hall of Louis XIV., is certainly not near as large, but in regal splendour and cost, this will no more compare with that, than a

cottage will compare with a hotel. The uses, however, were very different.

I shall not attempt to give you any accurate notion of the arrangement of the rest of this pile. There is a garden on the river, and a house which is occupied by the speaker. We went into St. Stephen's chapel, the House of Lords, the painted chamber, robing room, star chamber, &c., &c., but, after all, I brought away with me but a very confused idea of their relative positions.

St. Stephen's is literally a small chapel, or church, having been constructed solely for religious purposes. The commons have assembled in it, originally, exactly as our associations occasionally use the churches. It has the regular old fashioned side and end galleries, the speaker's chair occupying the usual situation of the pulpit. The end gallery is given up to the public, but the side galleries, though not often used, are reserved for the members. The *bar* is in a line with the front of the end gallery, and of course immediately beneath, while the *floor* of the house occupies the rest of the lower part of the building. I should think the whole chapel internally might be about fifty-five feet long, by about forty-one or two wide. The floor I paced, and made it nearly forty feet square. It is not precisely of these dimensions, but more like thirty-nine feet by forty-one or two. A good deal of even these straitened limits is lost, by a bad arrangement of seats behind the speaker's chair,

which is about a fourth of the way down the chapel; these seats rising above each other, like the transoms of a ship. The clerks are seated at one end of a long table in the centre of the room, and the benches run longitudinally, being separated into four *blocks*. They have backs, but nothing to write on. The distance between the table and the seats next it, may be three feet. It is sufficiently near to allow members on the first bench to put their feet against it, or on it, an attitude that is often assumed. The treasury bench is the one nearest the table, on the left, looking from the gallery, and the leaders of opposition sit on the right. The chair of the speaker has a canopy, and is a sort of throne. The wood is all of oak, unpainted; the place is lighted by candles, in very common brass chandeliers, and the whole has a gloomy and inconvenient air. Still it is not possible to view St. Stephen's with any other feelings than those of profound respect, its councils having influenced the civilized world, now for more than a century. I name this period, as that is about the date of the real supremacy of the parliament in this government. The chapel, however, has been used as its place of meeting, since the reign of Edward VI., or near three centuries. It is said that one hundred and thirty strangers can be seated in the end gallery. Small iron columns, with gilded Corinthian capitals, support the galleries.

The House of Lords is a very different place.

The room may be about the size of St. Stephen's, though I think it a little smaller, and there is no gallery.\* The throne, by no means a handsome one, is a little on one side, and the peers sit on benches covered with red cloth, in the centre, and within a railing. These benches occupy three sides of an area in the centre, while the throne stands on the fourth. In front of the latter are the wool sacks, which are a species of divan that do not touch a wall. Every thing is red, or rather crimson, from the throne down. There is a table, and places for the clerks, in the area. The chancellor is by no means as much cared for as the speaker. The seat of the latter is quite luxurious, but the former would have rather a hard time of it, were it not for a sort of false back that has been contrived for him, and against which he may lean at need. It resembles a fire-skreen, but answers its purpose.

The celebrated tapestry is a rude fabric. It must have been woven when the art was in its infancy, and it is no wonder that such ships met with no success. It is much faded, which, quite likely, is an advantage rather than otherwise. "The tapestry which *adorns* these walls" was a flight of eloquence that must have required

\* This was in 1828; at the return of the writer to England, in 1833, there was a gallery in the House of Lords, and it is hardly necessary to say, that, since that time, both houses have been burnt.

all the moral courage of Chatham to get along with. Like so much of all around it, however, one looks at it with interest, and not the less for its very faults.

I can tell you little of the adjuncts of the two houses of parliament. The rooms were all sufficiently common, and are chiefly curious on account of their uses, and their several histories. The eating and drinking part of the establishment struck me as being altogether the most commodious, for there is a regular coffee-house, or rather tavern, connected with them, where one can, at a moment's notice, get a cup of tea, a chop or a steak, or even something better still. In this particular, parliament quite throws congress and the *chambers* into the back ground. A dinner is too serious a thing with a Frenchman to be taken so informally, and then both he and the American are content with legislating in the day time. The late hours frequently drive the members of parliament to snatch a meal where they can. Tea is a blessed invention for such people, and Bellamy's is a blessed invention for tea.

After visiting Westminster, we gave part of a day to St. Paul's. This is truly a noble edifice. Well do I remember the impression it made on me, when, an uninstructed boy, fresh from America, I first stood beneath its arching dome. I actually experienced a sensation of dizziness, like that one feels in looking over a precipice. When

I returned home, and told my friends, among other traveller's marvels, that the steeple of Trinity could stand beneath this dome, and that its vane should not nearly reach its top, I was set down as one already spoilt by having seen more than my neighbours ! It is surprisingly easy to get that character in America, especially if one does not scruple to tell the truth. I was much within the mark as to feet and inches, but I erred in the mode of illustrating. Had I said that the dome of St. Paul's was a thousand feet high, I should have found a plenty of believers, but the moment I attempted to put one of our martin's boxes into it, self-love took the alarm, and I was laughed at for my pains. This was two and twenty years ago : have we improved much since that time ?

Although I no longer looked on St. Paul's with the fresh and unpractised eyes of 1806, it appeared to me now, what in truth it is, a grand and imposing edifice. In many respects it is better than St. Peter's, though, taken as a whole, it falls far short of it. When the richness of the materials, the respective dimensions, the details, and the colonade of St. Peter's are considered, it must be admitted that St. Paul's is not even a first class church, St. Peter's standing alone ; but I am not sure that the cathedral of London is not also entitled to form a class by itself, although one that is inferior.

The architecture of St. Paul's is severe and noble. There is very little of the meretricious in

it, the ornaments, in general, partaking of this character, both in their nature and distribution. A pitiful statue of Queen Anne, in front of the building, is the most worthless thing about it, being sadly out of place, without mentioning the monstrosity of the statue of a woman in a regular set of petticoats, holding a globe in her hand, and having a crown on her head. I am not quite sure she is not in a hoop. Had she been surrounded by a party of "the nobility and gentry," dressed for Almacks, the idea would have been properly carried out. Ladies who are not disposed to go all lengths, had better not be ambitious of figuring in marble.

The interior of St. Paul's was too naked, perhaps, until they began to ornament it with monuments. I remember it nearly in that state, not more than half a dozen statues having been placed, at my first visit to London. There are now many, and as they are all quite of the new school, they are chaste and simple. This church promises to throw Westminster Abbey, eventually, in the shade.

Of course we ascended to the whispering gallery. The effect is much the same as it is in all these places. I do not think Sir James Thornhill, who painted the dome, with passages from the life of St. Paul, a Michael Angelo, or even a Baron Gros, though, like the latter, he painted in oil. The colours are already much gone, which, perhaps, is no great loss.

I ought to have said that we came up, what our cicerone called a "geometry stair-case," of which the whole secret appeared to be, that the steps are made of stones of which one end are built into a circular wall. This "geometry stair-case" greatly puzzled my friend, the traveller, Mr. Carter, who agreed with the cicerone that it was altogether inexplicable. It is a wonder to be classed with that of the automaton chess-player. The effect, however, is pleasing.

Not satisfied with the whispering gallery, we ascended to another on the exterior of the dome, where we found one of the most extraordinary bird's eye views of a town, I remember ever to have seen. The day was clear, cool, and calm, and, of course, the vapour of the atmosphere floated at some distance above the houses. The whole panorama presented a field of dingy bricks, out of which were issuing thousands of streams of smoke, ascending in right lines to the canopy of murky vapour above. The effect was to give this vast dusty-looking cloud, the appearance of standing on an infinity of slender vapoury columns, which had London itself for their bases. In a small district around the cathedral, there also arose a perfect *chevaux de frise* of spires and towers, the appendages of the ordinary parish churches, of which London proper contains an incredible number. Some one said that three hundred might be



counted from the gallery, and really it did not strike me that there could be many less.

Seen in this manner, London offers little to be mentioned in comparison with Paris. It has no back ground, wants the grey angular walls, the transparent atmosphere, the domes and monuments, for we were on the only one of the former, and the general distinctness, necessary to satisfy the eye." It was not always easy to see at all, in the distance, and the objects were principally tame and confused. I like mists, feathery, floating, shadowy mists, but have no taste for coal smoke.

We were much amused with a remark of a good woman, who opened some of the doors above. There were sundry directions to visitors to pay certain stipulated prices, only, for seeing the different parts of the edifice. All the English cicerones have a formal, sing-song manner of going through their descriptions, that is often the greatest source of amusement one finds, but which nothing but downright mimicry can make intelligible to those who have not heard it. The woman, in question, without altering the key, or her ordinary mode of speaking, concluded her history, with saying, "by the rules of the church, I am entitled to only two pence for showing you this, and we are strictly prohibited from asking any more, but gentlefolks commonly give me a shilling." They have a custom here of saying that such and such

an act is *un-English*, but I fancy they will make an exception in favour of this.

If you are as much puzzled, as I was myself once, to understand in what manner such huge churches can be used, you will be glad to have the matter explained. In all Catholic cathedrals, you already know, there are divers chapels, that are more or less separated from the body of the building, in which different offices are frequently saying at the same time. Near the centre, or a little within the head of the cross (for this is the form they all have) is the choir. It is usually a little raised above the pavement, and is separated from the rest of the nave by a screen, by which it is more or less enclosed on the other sides. In this choir are performed all the cathedral services, the preaching taking place in a different part of the church; usually from movable pulpits. Frequently, however, these pulpits are fixtures against a pier, the size of the edifice rendering their appearance there of no moment.

In St. Paul's there is the screen and the choir, as at Canterbury. But instead of the canons or prebend's stalls, only, there are also pews for a congregation. There are, moreover, a pulpit and a reading-desk, and, the organ forming part of the screen, an organ-loft for the choir. In this chapel, or "heart" of the church, then, is the usual service performed. In Catholic cathedrals, you will understand that laymen, except in extraordinary

cases, are not admitted within the choir, and the organ is almost always at the end of the nave, over the great door, and beneath an oriel window. The cathedrals at Canterbury and Westminster, were both built for the Catholic worship, and they had their private chapels; but St. Paul's having arisen under the Protestant régime, is a little different. I believe there are private chapels in this building, but they are detached and few. After excepting the church or the choir, and the parts appropriated more properly to business, the remainder of this huge edifice can only be used on the occasions of great ceremonies. There are, however, a utility and fitness in possessing a structure for such objects, in the capital of a great empire, that will readily suggest themselves. There is something glorious and appropriate in beholding the temple of God rearing its walls above all similar things, which puts the shallow and pettifogging sophistry of closet-edifices and whittling sectarianism to manifest shame.

The absence of the side chapels gives a nobleness to the centre of St. Paul's, that is rather peculiar to itself. It is true that the choir, with the screen, which partially cuts off the side aisles, in some measure intercepts the view, and the eye nowhere embraces the whole extent, as in St. Peter's; a fact, that, coupled with its vast dimensions, must always render the *coup d'œil* of the interior of the latter, a wonder of the world. But

few churches show, relatively, as grand a transept and dome, as this. Apart from the dimensions, which, exclusively of the colonades, the vatican, and the sacristy, are in all things, about one-sixth in favour of St. Peter's, the difference between the *coups d'œil* of the two churches, exists in the following facts. On entering St. Peter's, the eye takes in, at a glance, the whole of the nave, from the great door at one end, to the marble throne of the pope, at the other. In St. Paul's, this view is intercepted by the screen, and the appliances of protestant worship just mentioned. In St. Peter's, there is everywhere an ornate and elaborate finish, of the richest materials, while the claims of St. Paul's to magnificence, depend chiefly on the forms and the grandeur of the dimensions. In St. Peter's, all the statuary, monuments, and other accessories, are on a scale suited to the colossal grandeur of the temple, the marble cherubs being in truth giants. Whereas, in St. Paul's, individuals being permitted to erect memorials in honour of their friends, the proportions have been less respected.

To conclude, St. Paul's, in the severity and even in the purity of its style is, in some few particulars, superior to the great Roman Basilica; but, these admissions made, it will not do to urge the comparison further, since the latter in size, material, details, and in the perfection of its subordinate art, has probably never been approached, as a whole, since the foun-

dations of the earth were laid. St. Paul's, like all Protestant churches, is wanting in the peculiar and grateful atmosphere of the temple. Still, like all large edifices, it is temperate, being cooler in summer and warmer in winter, than those that are smaller. At least, so it has always appeared to me.

Our visit happened to be made during the season of festivals, and more than a usual number of the officials were loitering about the church. Who they were, I cannot say, but several of them had the sleek, pampered air of well-fed coach horses ; animals that did nothing but draw the family to church on Sundays, and enjoy their stalls. There was one fellow, especially, who had an unpleasantly greasy look. He was in orders, but sadly out of his place, nature having intended him for a cook.

## LETTER V.

TO RICHARD COOPER, ESQ. COOPERSTOWN.

THE ice once broken, visitors began to appear at my door, and since my last, I have been gradually looking nearer and nearer, at the part of the world which it is usual to call society. A friend who knew England well, remarked to me, just before we left Paris—"you are going from a town where there is little company and much society, to one where there is no society and much company." Like most ambitious and smart sayings, that aim at sententiousness, there is some truth, blended with a good deal of exaggeration, in this. It is easy enough to see that association of all degrees, is more laboured, less graceful, and less regulated by reasonable and common sense motives in London, than in Paris. It is usual to say, that as between us and England, the latter having prescribed and definite degrees of rank, its upper classes have less jealousy of place, and of intrusion on their rights, than the same classes in America, and that society is consequently under less re-

straint. There is some truth in this opinion, as relates to us; but when England comes to be considered in connection with other European nations, I think the consequences of such a comparison are exactly the other way.

On the continent of Europe, nobility has long formed a strictly social *caste*. Its privileges were positive, its landmarks distinct, and its rules arbitrary. It is true, all this is gradually giving way before the spirit of the age, and the fruits of industry, but its effects are every where still to be traced. There is no more need of jealousy of the intrusion of the inferior in most European capitals, than in America there is distrust of the blacks forcing their way into the society of the whites. France is an exception to this rule, perhaps, but the *pêle mèle* produced by the revolution has been so complete, that just now one says and thinks little of origin and birth, from sheer necessity. It is too soon for things to fall into the ordinary channels, but when they do we shall probably see the effects of a reaction. Nothing can keep society unsettled, in this respect, but constant and rapid changes of fortunes, and, apart from revolutions, France is a country in which there is not likely to be much of these.

In England, it is very true there exists legal distinctions, as between the rights and powers of men. But it will be remembered that the real peers of England are a very small class. As a body they

have neither the wealth, the blood, nor numbers, of their side. I met, not long since, on the continent, a gentleman of the name of G——, who was the head of a very ancient and affluent family, in his own county. In the same place there happened to be a Lord G——, the descendant of three or four generations of peers. It was rather matter of merriment to the lookers on, that Lord G—— was very anxious to be considered as belonging to the family of Mr. G——, while the latter was a little disposed to repudiate him. Now, it needs no demonstration to prove that the peer enjoyed but a very equivocal social superiority over his namesake, the commoner. Admitting them to be of the same root, the latter was the head of the family, he had the oldest and the largest estate, and, in all but his political rank, he was the better man. It is quite obvious, under such circumstances, that the legal distinction counts for but little, in a merely social point of view.

The fact is that the gentry of England, as a class, are noble, agreeably to the standard of the rest of Europe. It is true they want the written evidences of their rank, because few such have ever been granted in England except to the titled ;\* but they have every requisite that is independent of positive law. Of all the Howards descended from the “Jockey of Norfolk,” and they are numerous, both

\* Esquires were formerly created by patent.



in England and America, only four or five are esteemed noble, because no more possess peerages ; and, yet, when we come to consider them as heirs of blood, it would be folly not to deem one as gentle as the rest.

Thus you see England is filled with those who have all the usual claims to birth, and in many cases that of primogeniture too, without enjoying any legal privileges, beyond the mere possession of their fortunes. The Earl of Surrey, the heir of the first peer of England, is just as much a commoner, in the eye of the law, as his butler. It is not the legal distinctions alone, therefore, that divide men into social castes in England, as on the continent of Europe, but opinion, and habit, and facts, as all are connected with origin, antiquity, estates, and manners. It is true that a peer enjoys a certain positive political consideration from the mere circumstance of his being a peer ; and just as far as this class extends, the assertion that their privileges put them above jealousies, is, I believe, true. I ascribe the circumstance that an American will be more likely to meet with a proper degree of civility among the nobles of England than among the classes beneath them, to this very fact. But the number of the rigidly noble is too small, to give its character to a society as broad and as peculiar as that of England. They exist in it, themselves, as exceptions rather than as the rule.

If we remove the titled from English society,

the principles of its formation and government are precisely the same as our own, however much the latter may be modified by circumstances. It is true, the fact that there is a small body at the summit of the social scale, protected in their position by positive ordinances, has an effect to render the whole system more factitious and constrained than it would otherwise be, but, nevertheless, with these distinctions, it is identical with our own. Though these privileged are not enough to give society its tone, they form its goal. The ambition of being in contact with them, the necessity of living in their circle, and their real superiority are the causes of the *showing propensities* of the English, propensities that are so obvious and unpleasant as to render their association distinct from that of almost every other people. The arbitrary separation of the community between the gentle and the simple prevents these efforts in the other parts of Europe, nor is it any where else so obvious as among ourselves.\* I take it that it exists with us (though in an infinitely lessened degree) because we are subject to so many of the same causes.

The moment you create a motive for this irritating social ambition, and supply the means of its gratification, a serious injury is given to the case,

\* A little of this feeling is getting up in Paris, under the new order of things, which favour the pretensions of money, but France is in the transition state, and it is too soon to predict the result.

nature and grace of society. In England the motive exists in the wish to mingle with the privileged classes, and the means in the peculiar character of the gentry, in the great prosperity of the commerce and manufactures of the country, and in the insensible manner in which all the classes glide into each other and intermingle.

There is much to admire in the fruits of such a social organization, while there is, also, a great deal to condemn. A principal benefit is the superior elevation and training that are imparted to those, who, under other systems, would be kept always in a condition of dependant degradation; and one of its principal disadvantages is the constant moral fermentation, that so sensibly impairs the charm and nature of the English circles. A looker-on here, has described the social condition of England to be that of a crowd ascending a ladder, in which every one is tugging at the skirts of the person above, while he puts his foot on the neck of him beneath. After the usual allowances, there is truth in this figure, and you will, at once, perceive, that its consequences are to cause a constant social scuffle. When men (and more especially *women*) meet under the influence of such a strife, too much time is wasted in the indulgence of the minor and lower feelings, to admit of that free and generous communion that can alone render intercourse easy and agreeable. There must be equality of feeling to

permit equality of deportment, and this can never exist in such a *mêlée*.

Nor is the English noble always as absolutely natural and simple as it is the fashion to say he is, or as he might possibly be demonstrated to be by an ingenious theory. Simple he is certainly in mere deportment, for this is absolute as a rule of good breeding; and he may be simple in dress, for the same law now obtains generally, in this particular; and, if it did not, in his peculiar position, it would be the old story of the *redingotte gris* of Napoleon revived; but he is not quite so simple in all his habits and pretensions. I will give you a few laughable proofs of the contrary.

A dozen noblemen may have laid their own patrician hands on my knocker, within a fortnight. As I use the dining-room to write in, I am within fifteen feet of the street door, and no favour of this sort escapes my ears. Ridiculous as it may seem, there is a species of etiquette established, by which a peer shall knock louder than a commoner! I do not mean to tell you that parliament has passed a law to that effect, but I do mean to say that so accurate has my ear become, that I know a Lord by his knock, as one would know Velluti by his touch. Now a loud knock may be sometimes useful as a hint to a loitering servant, but it was a queer thought to make it a test of station.

I had occasion to go into the country, a day or two since, with two ladies. On our return, the

latter asked permission to leave cards, at one or two doors in the way. The footman was particularly cautioned about his rap, one of the ladies explaining to me, that the fellow had got a loud knock by living with Lord ——. Quite lately too, I saw an article in the Courier complaining of the knocks of the doctors, who were said to disturb their patients by their *tintamarres* and, moreover, were accused, in terms, of rapping as loud as noblemen!

While on the subject, I may as well add, that no one, but the inmates of the house, uses the bell in London, although there is always one. The postman, the beggar, the footman, the visitor, all have their respective raps, and all are noticed according to their several degrees of clamour. I walked into Berkley Square, yesterday, to leave cards for Lord and Lady G——. Determined to try an experiment, I knocked as modestly as possible, without descending quite as low as the beggar. At that hour, there were always two footmen in the hall of the house, and I saw the arm of one at the window, quite near the door. He did not budge. I waited fully two minutes, and raised the note, a little, but with no better success. I then rapped *à la peer of the realm*, and my hand was still on the knocker, as the lazy rogue opened the door. I think I could already point out divers other petty usages of this nature, but shall defer the account of them, until my opinions are confirmed by longer observation.

In the meanwhile, these trifling examples have led me away from the main subject.

A chief effect of the social struggles of England is a factitious and laboured manner. As respects mere deportment, the higher ranks, and they who most live in their intimacy, as a matter of course, are the least influenced by mere forms. But, as one descends in the social scale, I think the English get to be much the most artificial people I know. Instead of recognising certain great and governing rules for deportment, that are obviously founded in reason and propriety, and trusting to nature for the rest, having heard that simplicity is a test of breeding, they are even elaborate and studied in its display. The mass of the people conduct in society like children who have had their hair combed and faces washed, to be exhibited in the drawing-room, or with a staid simplicity that reminds you always how little they are at their ease, and of the lectures of the nurse.

I have seen eight or ten men sitting at a dinner table for two hours, with their hands in their laps, their bodies dressed like grenadiers, and their words mumbled between their teeth, evidently for no reason in the world but the fact they had been told that quiet and subdued voices were the tone of the higher classes. This boarding-school finish goes much further than you would be apt to think in London society, though it is almost unnecessary to say, it is less seen in the upper classes

than elsewhere, for no man accustomed to live with his equals, and to consider none as his betters, let him come from what country he may, will ever be the slave of arbitrary rules, beyond the point of reason, or no further than they contribute to his ease, and comfort, and tastes.

Something of this factitious spirit, however, extends itself all through English society, since a portion of even the higher classes have a desire to distinguish themselves by their habits. Thus it is that we find great stress laid on naked points of deportment, as tests of breeding and associations, that would be laughed at elsewhere, and which, while they are esteemed imperious during their reign, come in and going out periodically, like fashions in dress. Of course, some little of this folly is to be found in all countries, but so much more, I think, is to be found here, than any where else, as to render the trait national and distinctive.

While there is all this rigid and inexorable tyranny of custom in small things, there is also apparent, in English manners, an effort to carry out the dogmas of the new school, by ultra ease and nature. The union of the two frequently forms as odd a jumble of deportment as one might wish to see. I think it is the cause of the capriciousness, for which these people have a reputation. I have had a visit from a young man of some note here, and one who lives fully one half his time, by these conventional rules, and yet, in

the spirit of ease, which is thought to pervade modern manners, he seated himself a-straddle of his chair, with his face turned inwards, in a first visit, and in the presence of ladies! Still this person is well connected, and a member of parliament. He reminded me of the man who advertised a horse to be seen, with its tail where the head ought to be. The rogue had merely haltered the animal, wrong end foremost, to the manger. Sitting on the floor, with the foot in a hand, or suspiciously like a tailor, is by no means unusual.

When one gets at all above the commoner classes in England, it strikes me there is much less of obtrusive vulgarity than with us, while there is much more of the easy impertinence of which I have just given a specimen. This is contrary to our own experience of the English, but we see few above a class that is quite below all comment, in describing a nation. In two or three instances, in houses where I have made first visits, I have observed the young men lolling at their length on the ottomans and sofas, and scarcely giving themselves the trouble to rise, in a way that would hardly be practised at Paris. Such things are disrespectful to strangers, and in exceedingly bad taste, and I think them quite English; still, you are not to suppose that they are absolutely common here, though they are more frequent than could be wished. I have seen them in noblemen's houses. But the go-by-rule simplicity, you will understand, is so common, in the imitative classes, as to be distinctive.



As for the remark of there being no society in London, it may be true as a rule, but there are glorious exceptions. An American, after all, is so much like an Englishman, and one has so much more pleasure in the interchange of thought, when the conversation is carried on in his own language, that I ought, perhaps, to distrust my tastes a little; but taking them as a criterion, I should say that the means of social and intellectual pleasures are quite as amply enjoyed in London, as in the capital of France. The dinners are not as easy, especially while the women are at table, but either I have fallen into a peculiar vein of breakfasts, or the breakfasts have fallen into my vein, for I have found some twenty of them, at which I have already been present, among so many of the pleasantest entertainments I have ever met with. It will scarcely do for us to affect disdain for the society of London, whatever may be the rights of a Frenchman in this respect.

Mr. Rogers, who is my near neighbour, you already know, asked me a second and a third time, in the course of a few days, and on each occasion I had the pleasure of seeing a few of the prominent men of the country. The first day I met Lord John Russell, and the second Sir James M'Intosh. One seldom hears of a distinguished man, without forming some notion, erroneous or not, of his exterior. I knew little of the former of these gentlemen, beyond the fact that he was rather prominent in opposition, and that he had enrolled himself

on the page of letters; but I had been told he was conspicuous for a "bull-dog tenacity" in clinging to his object and in carrying his point. The term "bull-dog," and some vague notion of the Russells of old, led me to expect a man of thews and sinews, and one adapted, by his *physique*, to carry out the lofty designs of a vigorous intellect. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Lord John Russell is a small, quiet man, with an air of ill-health; reminding me a little, in his mouth and manner of speaking, of Captain Ridgley of the navy, though the latter has altogether the best *physique*. He complained of his health, and talked but little. I remember one of his remarks, however, for he said that parliament was "getting too thin-skinned" for a healthful state of things. Did he mean to compare the present times with those in which his illustrious ancestor lost his head?

Sir James M'Intosh I had figured a robust, brawny, negligent Scot, with a broad accent, and strong national peculiarities. Instead of realizing this picture, he appeared a man of good stature, and, considering his years, of an easy and graceful person, with somewhat of an air of the world, and with as little of Scottish provincialism as was necessary. His voice was gentle and pleasant, and it was quite difficult, though not impossible, to trace any of the marks of his origin in his speech. Of these he had much less even than Sir Walter Scott. He proved to be the best talker I have ever heard. I am ac

acquainted with a Neapolitan, who is more eloquent in conversation, and Colonel C——, of Georgia, is *perhaps* neater and closer in his modes of expressing himself, but neither discovers the same range of thought and information, through a medium as lucid, comprehensive, and simple. Sir James M'Intosh is a free, but by no means an oppressive, talker in company. He is full of material, and, evidently, is willing to give it vent, but he also is content to listen. I greatly prefer his oral to his written style. I believe the former would be thought the best, could it be written down as he utters his words. The bias of his mind is to philosophy, in which he is both comprehensive and ingenious, and it appears to me that he makes himself more clearly intelligible in conversation than on paper. It is very true that abstrusities occur in reasoning that require the closet to be comprehended, and which best suit the pen, while it would be a defect to exact the same attention in society ; but what I mean is, that (in my estimation) Sir James M'Intosh would be more likely to express the same thought felicitously while conversing, than in deliberately committing it to paper.

That he entertains some such notion of himself I have reason to think by a remark he made, on quitting the table yesterday. We had been speaking of the powers of the different distinguished orators of England and America, and some comparisons had been made between Pitt, and Fox, and

Burke, and Sheridan. "After all," observed Sir James, as we went out together, "conversation is the test of a man's powers. If it is in him, he can bring it out, and all are witnesses of the manner in which it is done." Too much importance ought not to be attached to a casual remark like this, but the opinion struck me as singularly in opposition to Addison's celebrated answer about his inability to pay a shilling on the spot, while he could draw for a thousand pounds. In this manner are we all influenced by our own personal qualities ; Addison could write better than M'Intosh, and M'Intosh could talk better than Addison. A man may certainly have it in him, and not always be able to bring it out, as is proved by thousands besides Addison.

I found Sir James M'Intosh better informed on the subject of America than any European I have yet seen. His ideas of our condition are more accurate and more precise. He spoke of several of our jurists with commendation ; not in the extravagant and exaggerated manner that is so much in fashion at home, but with moderate respect, and frankly. All this time, however, it was quite evident that he thought us a people who might yet do prodigies, rather than as a people who had performed them.

Mr. Rogers introduced the subject of American poetry. By general consent, it was silently agreed to treat all who had gone before the last ten years,

as if they had not written. I named to them Messrs. Halleck and Bryant, of neither of whom did they appear to know any thing. In consequence of something that had previously fallen from our host, I had obtained an imperfect copy of light American poetry, from Mr. Miller, the bookseller. It contained Alnwick Castle, as well as several things by Mr. Bryant. I left it with them, and both gentlemen subsequently expressed themselves much pleased with what they found in it. Alnwick Castle, in particular, had great success, but I do not think the book itself did justice to Mr. Bryant.

While speaking of Mr. Rogers, I cannot avoid adverting to the manner in which a portion of the London press is in the practice of using his name. One of them especially, constantly speaks of him as a confirmed jester. I have been told there is a private pique and a malicious envy, in all this, and that he is represented as a jester because he has a peculiar aversion to jests. The motive is self-evident, and of itself places the offending party below a serious refutation. But, lest you may have imbibed some erroneous notions, in this respect, concerning a man whose name is familiar to all America, there may be no harm in giving you a traveller's views of the matter. Mr. Rogers is neither a jester, nor one who has any particular aversion to a clever saying. No man's tone of manner is better,

and few men have a more pleasant way of saying pleasant things. He lives in the very best circles of London, where he appears to me to be properly appreciated and esteemed. Although as far as possible from being the incessant joker his enemies would represent him to be, I know no one who occasionally gives a keener or a finer edge to a remark, or one in better taste. I should say his house is positively a nucleus of the very best literary society of London, and, although a decided liberal in politics, he seems to me to be personally on equally good terms with all parties, with the exception of those, who, by their very tone towards himself, betray that they are unfit associates for any gentleman.

The *petits déjeuner*s of Mr. Rogers have deservedly a reputation in London. Taking all in conjunction, the house, the host, the curiosities, the situation, the company and the tone, it is not easy to conceive of any thing better in their way. Women frequent them as well as men, and, by a tact in the master in making his selections and assorting his company, or by the atmosphere of the abode, or by some cause I shall not attempt to explain, it is unusual to see or hear any thing out of place, or out of season. Not satisfied with the mental treats he dispenses, the nicest care is had to the table, and but for these admirable breakfasts I should be apt to pronounce the meal one, of whose rare qualities and advantages, the English in gene-

ral have no proper notion. There is no attempt at the French entertainment in all this, every thing being strictly simple, and one might say national ; but, while I see England and America in the entire arrangement, both countries are made to appear so much better than common, that I have been driven to a downright examination of the details to make certain of the fact. Commend me, in every respect, to the delicious breakfasts of St. James's Place !

## LETTER VI.

TO MRS. J——, NEW YORK.

IF one, in the least in the world, were to judge from the invitations that lie on his table, during the season, he would be very apt to pronounce London an eating and drinking town ; but inferences are not to be rashly drawn, and, before we come to our conclusions, it will be well to remember the numbers there are to eat and drink. Westminster is a large town, entirely filled with the affluent of the greatest empire of modern times, and their dependants. Although comparatively few strangers circulate in the drawing-rooms of London, the gay and idle of the whole kingdom assemble in them periodically. Under the incessant fire of invitations that is let off on these occasions, it is not to be wondered at, if a few random shots should hit even a rambling American, like myself ; for while we are not absolutely loved in the “ British Isles,” they do not churlishly withhold from us the necessaries of life.

I am very sensible that my experience is too



limited to give you a proper and full idea of the gay world of England, but I may tell a portion of what I have seen, and, by adding it to the contributions of others, you may be able to get some more accurate notions than are to be derived from the novels of the day. As a traveller is a witness it is no more than fair that some idea should be given of the circumstances under which he obtained his facts, in order that one may know how to appreciate his testimony. I may have now been in fifty houses, since my arrival in London, including in this list that of the duke down to that of the merchant. Perhaps a third have been the residences of people of quality ; a large portion have been in the intermediate class between nobility and trade, and the remainder have certainly savoured of the shop. To this list, however, may be added a dozen which embrace the indescribable *omnium gatherum* of men who have achieved notoriety as *litterateurs* without personal rank, players, artists, and managers. I say *litterateurs* without personal rank, for, in this age of book-making, half the men of fashion about town have meditated, or have actually perpetrated the crime of publishing. The mania of scribbling is not quite as strong here as at Paris, where it afflicts young and old, high and low, from the king on his throne to the driver of the *cabriolet* in his seat; but as Sir Walter Scott, who is now here, whispered me the other day, when I pointed out

to him a young nobleman as a "brother chip" (and mere *chips* of *his log* are we in good sooth) "The peers are all going mad!

One of my first essays of life, in a great house, beyond a morning call, was at a dinner at Lord ———'s. ——— house is in the skirts of London, and was constructed as a country residence, though the growth of this mammoth town is gradually bringing it within the smoke and din of the capital. The lamps extend miles beyond it. Taking a hackney coach I drove to the gate, the lawn being separated from the high-way, or rather street, by a high blind wall. Here I alighted and walked to the house. The building is of bricks, and I should think of the time of Elizabeth, though less quaint than most of the architecture of that period. At any rate Lady ——— told me that in the room in which we dined, Sully had been entertained, and his embassy occurred in 1603. This building was once in a family different from the present, and is also celebrated as having been the abode of Addison, after his marriage with Lady Warwick. There were formerly Earls of ——— too, of another race. But I cannot tell you any thing of their history. The present possessors of ——— house are of a family too well known to need any explanation. Lord ——— being the grandson of the man who so long battled it with the first ———, as his son did with the second.

The proximity of London and the value of land

forbids the idea of a park, but the lawn was ample, and prettily enough arranged. It is scarcely necessary to say that it was neat, in a country where order and system and the fitness of things, seem to form a part of its morals, if not indeed of its religious faith. The lawn is about the size of your own at Rye, and I should think the house might contain twice as much room as that of the Patreón. The rooms were old fashioned, and, in some respects quaint, and, to me, they all seemed out of proportion narrow for their length. That in which we dined had a ceiling in the style of Elizabeth's reign, being much carved and gilded. It was not as large as the hall of the manor-house, at Albany, nor in any other respect, much more peculiar, although the ceiling was essentially higher.

—— house as a country residence, in England, is but of a secondary class, though, for a town abode, it would rank among the first. Whoever may own it, fifty years hence, will probably enjoy a preferment so easily and quietly obtained, for the new improvements at Pimlico bid fair to push fashion into this quarter. We should pull the building down, however, if we had it in New York; firstly, because it does not stand on a thoroughfare, where one can swallow dust free of cost; secondly, because it wants the two rooms and folding doors, and thirdly, because it has no iron *chevaux de frise* in front.

The invitations to dinner, here, vary from seven to half-past seven. It is not common to receive one for an earlier hour, nor do regular people often dine at a later. As this was semi-rural, I had been asked to come early, and Sir James M'Intosh, had been kind enough to leave word with the porter, that he was to be sent for when I arrived. Accordingly, I had the pleasure of passing half an hour with him, before the rest of the party assembled. He took me into the grounds in the rear of the house, which are still quite extensive for the situation, though I presume Kensington, which is beginning to enclose the spot on that side, has already curtailed them in a degree. I was told that a proposition had lately been made to the proprietor, to dispose of a part on lease, but that he preferred air and room to an addition of some thousands a year to his rental. There is an historical avenue of trees, behind the house, and a garden near by ; but the latter struck me as insignificant.

We went into the library, which is a fine room, on the second floor, including the whole depth of the house. There were recesses for reading, and writing, and also for lumber, on one of its sides. My companion showed me tables at different ends of the room, and stated there was a tradition that Addison, when composing, was in the habit of walking between the two, and of aiding his inspirations, by using the bottles placed on them for that purpose. I beg you will not mention this,

however, lest it excite a sensation among the "ripe scholars" of New York.

Our party at dinner was not large. There were present, besides the family, and a lady or two, Mr. Rogers, Sir James M'Intosh, Mr. Tierney, and an old nobleman, a Lord B—— and his son. The table was square, and we sat round it without any attention to precedency, the master of the house occupying a corner, while the mistress had a seat in the centre. As this was done quietly, and without the parade of an *impromptu fait à loisir*, the effect was particularly good. So was the dinner. I do not think the tables of London, however, of a very high order. The viands are generally better than those of Paris, but the cookery is far less knowing, and the arrangement, while it is more pretending, is, I think, generally less elegant and graceful. It appears to be as much a matter of etiquette for a peer to dine off of silver here, as it is to keep a carriage. Wealthy commoners sometimes use plate also, but opinion has so much influence over things of this nature, in England, that it is not always sufficient to be able to buy a luxury, to be permitted to enjoy it in peace. In England certain indulgences are accorded to station, and it is deemed *contra bonos mores*, to assume them without the necessary qualifications. Something of this feeling must exist every where when there are distinctions in rank, but, in this country, rank being so positive, while the competition is open

to all, that the outs watch their fellows closely, as stealing a privilege is thought to be stealing from them. "Do you see that silly fellow," asked ——, as we were walking together, and pointing to a man who had just passed—"his father was in trade and left him a large fortune, and, now he is dashing upon the town, like a nabob. He actually had the impudence lately to give his footmen cockades." There was a fellow !

Nothing is in worse taste than to talk much of dishes and wines at table, I allow, but one may show his gratitude for good things of this sort, afterwards, I hope, without offending the *bien-séances*. I believe the table of —— house is a little peculiar in London ; at least, such is its character according to my limited experience. As to the mere eating and drinking, New York is a better town than London. We set handsomer tables too, on the whole, with the exception of the size (our own being invariably too narrow), the plate, and the attendants. In porcelain, glass, cutlery, table linen, and the dishes, I am clearly of opinion, that the average of the respectable New York dinners, is above the average of those of London. There may be, now and then, a man of high rank here, who, on great occasions, throws us far into the shade, but these cases are exceptions, and I am now speaking of the rule. On the point of plate, I believe there is more of it, in the way of ounces, in the single city of London, than in the

whole twenty-four states of the American Union, put together.

During dinner, as the stranger, I had the honour of a seat next to Lady ———. She offered me a plate of herrings, between the courses. Being in conversation at the moment, I declined it, as I should not have done, according to strict etiquette, especially as it was offered by the mistress of the house. But my rule is the modern one of pleasing one's self on such occasions; besides I never suspected the magnitude of the interest involved in the affair. "You do not know what you say," she good humouredly added—"They are *Dutch*." I believe I stared at this, coming as it did from the mistress of a table so simply elegant and so *recherché*. "*Dutch!*" I involuntarily repeated, though I believe I looked at the same time, as if it was a herring after all. "Certainly; we can only get them *through an ambassador*." What a luxury would a potato become, if we could contrive to make it contraband! I shall hold a Dutch herring in greater respect, as long as I live.

Unluckily there is nothing prohibited in America, and it is a capital oversight in graduating our comforts, it is such a pleasure to sin! I believe I got out of the difficulty by saying there were too many good things of native production, to require a voyage to Holland, on my account. Still I frankly avow I ought to have eaten one, even to the fins and tail. From some such feeling as this,

has probably come the old saying of "fish, flesh, and red herring."

There are a thousand things in life, which will not stand the test of philosophical inquiry, but on which no small part of our daily enjoyments depend. I have mentioned this little anecdote, not because it is particularly pertinent to the house in which I was dining, which would be particularly impertinent in me, but, because I think it illustrative of a principle that pervades the whole structure of English society. Things appear to me, to be more than usually estimated here, by the difficulty there may be in attaining them, and less than usual by their intrinsic value. In citing such examples one is always obliged to keep a salvo for poor human nature (and why Esop made the animal in the manger a *dog* I never could discover) but, apart from this, England is singularly a begrudging country. Every thing is appreciated by its price. They have an expression always in their mouths that is pregnant of meaning, and which I fancy was never heard any where else. They say a thing is "*ridiculously cheap*." Now when one becomes ridiculous from buying a thing at a low price, common sense is in a bad way. This is one of the weaknesses of man from which we are more than usually exempt, and I believe that with us, free trade may boast of having done more on this point than on any other.

I was asked by the mistress of this house where



I had learned to speak so good English? This surprising me quite as much as the herring!

The old nobleman I have mentioned, had the civility to offer to take me to town in his chariot; and I was safely deposited in St. James's Place, about ten.

As Lord —— is a man of mark, it may be well if I add that he had an air of great benevolence, and that there were much nature and *bonhommie* in his manner. I thought his feeling towards America kind, and his disposition to speak of it stronger than usual. His wife is possessed of some property in New York, and he complained a little of the squatters; the land, he told me, lying on the Genessee, in Connecticut. You may judge from this single circumstance how much attention we attract, when a man made this mistake about his own property. The day may not be distant, when lands in either Connecticut, or New York, will more avail his heir than the lawn before —— house. Reform must move fast in England, or it will be overtaken by revolution.\* Sir James M'Intosh pithily observed, that he supposed "there was about the same danger of finding a squatter in Connecticut, as there would be of finding one in the county of Kent." He is the only man I have yet met in England who

\* In consequence of the delay in publishing these "gleanings," the writer is often doubtful whether he ought to indulge such prophecies. These words, however, were actually written in 1828.

appears to have any clear and defined notions of us. They will not acquire this knowledge, simply because they do not wish to acquire it, until we bear hard on some of their interests, political or pecuniary, and then light will pour in upon them in a flood, as the sun succeeds the dawn. That day is not distant.

After the herring, and before the dessert, a page, attired in a very suspicious manner, entered with a regular censer, such as is used before the altar, smoking with frankincense, and, swinging it about, he perfumed the room. I thought this savoured a little of "*protestant emancipation*."

One of my next dinners was at — house. This is a residence in the heart of London, and the invitation ran for a quarter past seven, *very precisely*. The English have a reputation, in America, for coming late, and I can understand it, as one accustomed to their hours must feel a reluctance to dine as early as five or six; but here, the sittings of parliament excepted, I think it rare to be behind the time.

I breakfasted a few mornings since with Mr. Rogers, who had invited five or six others. I was the first there, and I was punctual to the hour. Not another soul had come. On my laughing at their laziness, "you shall have the laugh all of your own side," said the poet, who forthwith ordered breakfast. We sat down alone. Presently Stewart Newton showed himself; then Kenney, the

dramatist; then Mr. Luttrell, and the remainder in succession. We, who were first on the ground, treated the matter coolly, and the others were left to enjoy it as they might. A man who wilfully misses any portion of these delightful breakfasts, is quite beneath sympathy.

I sent my man to set my watch by the palace clock, and as the distance was short, a few minutes before the hour named, for the dinner just mentioned, I drew on my gloves and walked leisurely to the door, which was but a step from my own lodgings. It was exactly a quarter past seven when I knocked. On entering the drawing-room, I found it full of people. "Very precisely" means, then, a little before the hour. Among the guests were Sir ———, one of the most fashionable physicians of London, and Dr. ———, lately consecrated Bishop of ———. The latter was the first dignified clergyman I had met, and, irreverent though it seem, his appearance diverted me out of measure. He wore a wig, in the first place, that set at naught both nature and art, and not satisfied with this, he had on a little silk petticoat, that I believe is called a stole. One may get accustomed to this clerical masquerade, as well as to any thing else, and there is little argument for or against it, in abstract philosophy; but I shall contend that neither the little wig, nor the *jupon*, is any more of a natural taste than olives, though I dare say one who has been envying

others their possession half his life, may think them very becoming.

Both the bishop and the physician had a precise and potent manner with them, that showed how broad is the separation between *castes* and the professions, in this country.

“Mon tailleur m’a dit que les gens de qualité étoient comme cela le matin.”

We were about to take our seats, when the bishop, who was on my left hand, bent over the table and uttered a sound that was singularly like that made by a hound gaping. He then commenced an apology to Lady —, who, in her turn, apologized to him, saying, “you were quite right, my lord.” To my surprise, I learned the divine had been saying grace!

This dinner offered nothing worth repeating, except a short conversation I had with my neighbour, the bishop. He asked me if I knew Dr. *Hubbart*. I was obliged to answer, “No.” “From what part of America do you come?” “From New York.” “I thought Dr. *Hubbart* well known in that state. Is he not its bishop?” “You must mean Dr. *Hobart*, who was lately in England, I think.” “Hubbart, or Hobart; we have a noble family in this country of the name of Hobart, which we pronounce *Hubbart*, and we called your bishop, *Hubbart* too, thinking it might flatter

him." Here was a finesse, for a successor of St. Peter and St. Paul !

The bishop then began to speak of the well known sermon preached by Dr. Hobart, after his return from Europe, a sermon which was not very favourable to an established church, you will remember. I said a little in his defence, observing that he had probably written from his convictions, and that, however erroneous, a conscientious discharge of duty was not to be condemned. To this "my neighbour had no objection ; but he complained that Dr. Hobart held language so different when abroad, that he had disappointed and grieved his friends in England. This, you will perceive, was little short of accusing our good bishop of a vice as mean as a toad-eating hypocrisy. Something like this he is charged with in some of the church publications, here.

All who knew Dr. Hobart will exonerate him from the imputation of calculating disingenuousness. His fault, if fault it be, lay just the other way. Still I think a desire to avoid unpleasant topics, as well as the wish to say pleasant things, may have induced him to be silent, on some occasions, when it might have been better to speak, and not always to have measured the extent of his concessions. It moreover requires some time, and not a little practice, for an Englishman and an American fully to understand each other, though

speaking the same language.— I had a proof of this fact this very evening, and I will relate the circumstance, by way of illustrating my meaning.

The night previously I was in company with Lord N—— and Mr. B——, both of whom are members of the House of Commons, and whigs. The former was very particular in inquiring how we prevented frauds under the vote by ballot. I explained to these two gentlemen the process, which, as you have never attended an election, it may be well to explain to you. It is simply this. The ballot is put in the hands of a public officer, who is himself chosen by the people, and who is obliged to hold it in such a way that every one can see it is not changed. In this manner it is put into the box. Thus the elector is prevented from slipping in two tickets along side of each other; the officer cannot change the ticket; and when they come to count the votes, if two are rolled together, both are rejected.

To me this explanation seemed perfectly clear; but I saw, at the time, my auditors did not appear to be of the same way of thinking. After dinner, at —— house, when we had returned to the drawing-room, Lord A——, the son of the master of the house, and Lord John Russell, both prominent men in the opposition, came to me, and the former, who has stronger notions in favour of the ballot than is usual in England, observed that he had heard me quoted at Brookes's as giving an

opinion against the vote by ballot. I answered that my opinion was strongly in favour of the ballot, and that I did not remember even to have spoken at all on the subject, except on the previous night to Lord N—— and Mr. B——, when the question was not of the *utility* of the ballot, but of the *manner in which we prevented frauds under the system*. I was desired to repeat our mode of proceeding, but neither of these gentlemen appeared to me to be perfectly satisfied. Of course, this ill-luck in explaining set me to reflecting, and by dint of thought, observation, and inquiries, I believe I have arrived at the truth. By *frauds* these gentlemen meant to ask me, “In what manner do you prevent the elector who has pledged himself to vote for you, from voting for another man at the polls?” As these pledges, in England, are four times in five given by the dependant to his patron, the tradesman to the employer, and the tenant to the landlord. The inquiry was to know, if we had discovered any means by which the very object for which the vote by ballot had been instituted, might be defeated under the ballot! It strikes me this is a peculiarly English mode of doing things.

Here, then, you see how easy it is for us to misunderstand each other; for Lord A—— admitted that it was Lord N—— who quoted me in the manner he had mentioned; and how much care and experience are necessary for an Englishman to give a correct account of even the declared opinions of an American, and, of course, *vice versa*.

As respects Dr. Hobart, it is understood, that, like almost every clergyman of our church, who goes to England to pass any time, he saw reason to alter many of his previously cherished opinions. In the sermon to which there has been allusion, he said that, of the two, he should prefer for his church, the persecution of the state to a legal establishment, and this, an opinion that would be very likely to rankle in the breast of a new-made bishop, is also an opinion that he himself, probably, did not entertain, or at least in so strong a light, when he sailed from home. Now, some time and observation are necessary to produce these changes, and Dr. Hobart, or any other man, may very conscientiously think, and thinking, express himself differently, on quitting a country, from what he had done on entering it.

But I would strenuously urge on every American who really loves the institutions of his country, never to make any concessions to mere politeness, on these topics, when actually required to say any thing in England. Indeed, politeness has few claims when principles are concerned, and it is rare to meet an Englishman, in America or any where else, who thinks himself bound to sacrifice even a prejudice to such a claim.

There is another point of view in which this charge against Dr. Hobart ought to be considered. There is, quite evidently, here, a secret distrust of the justice of the present system, both political



and religious, and a latent apprehension of its not enduring forever. Every thing wears out, even to the rock, and time is the parent of changes. Even they who maintain that our system is but a single step removed from despotism, know that our system must, in principle at least, be the next great change of England, and they search eagerly for testimony against its merits, from those who, having lived under it, are supposed to be acquainted with its action. Thus an American, who betrays the smallest leaning to their side of the argument, is eagerly quoted, and used as authority in their favour. Such may have been the case with Dr. Hobart, who, in the warmth of his feeling towards a church from which his own is derived, and which its worst enemies must admit has so much that is excellent, has probably uttered expressions to which too much meaning has been attached, or which, indeed, he may have seen good reason himself to change on a closer examination, after admitting the more comprehensive views that are always opened by travelling.

From ——— house Mr. ——— and myself proceeded to Berkely Square, to make a call. As we were in the hall, Lord ———, one of the guests, understanding our intention, offered to take us in his chariot. As I had no acquaintance with this gentleman, I put myself at the disposition of my companion, who decided to accept the offer. Another carriage was standing before the door, and

casting my eye at it, I was half inclined to think that the bishop, by some droll freak, had got up on its box. The coachman was in deep black, wore a cocked hat, and a wig so very like that I had been admiring in the house, that, to my uninstructed eye, they appeared to be one and the same. Some such conceit must have passed through the mind of Lord ——, for we were no sooner seated, than he began to discuss the subject of coachmen's wigs. It would seem that a fashion of decorating the heads of the Jehus of the "nobility and gentry" with this ornament, has lately come in, and most of the conceits of this nature being already monopolized by the bench, the bar, or parliament, they who invented the mode have been compelled to trespass a little on the sacred rights of the church. After some cogitation, pro and con, Lord —— decided against the wigs.

On reaching the house to which we were going, we alighted, in the order in which we sat, which brought Lord —— in advance. In this manner, as a matter of course, we ascended the stairs. When about half way up, my companion stopped, and appeared to be examining a vase filled with rose leaves, one of the customs that the extreme luxury of the age has introduced in London. It was some little time, however, before I discovered the real cause of the delay, which was merely to allow Lord ——, who was a fat old man, and walked slow, to get up stairs before us. ' This he did, was

announced, and entered the drawing-room first, we following and entering as if we had not come in his party! It was very good natured in this gentleman to offer a stranger the use of his carriage, but now I understand the conditions, I shall not accept it the next time, even though he should change his mind and give his coachman a wig.

I exonerate the English for a portion of their want of manners, as respects us. It is, to a certain extent, our own fault. We have the reputation of being notorious tuft-hunters in England, and, I am afraid, not always without cause. Nothing is more natural than that one educated in American society, should feel a curiosity to see the higher classes of a country like England. Such a feeling would, under ordinary circumstances, be stronger perhaps, in the American accustomed to the really good company of his own country, than in another, for it would, in a degree, be necessary to his habits. Names, and titles, and local distinctions make little difference between men who have access to civilized society, and who are equally accustomed to consider themselves at its head. The usages of polite life, sentiment and training are accessible to all, and nothing is effected by dividing the community into *castes*, but depressing all beneath the highest. When you give a man education, manners, principles, tastes and money (and all are the certain fruits of civilization) you do not change his positive position by adding titles, though you do change it

relatively, and these relations can only be obtained at the expense of the inferior. You compel the latter to stop in the middle of the stairs, without walking like a man to the top, but you do not elevate the other an inch. My companion and myself got into the drawing-room later, for this *coup de politesse*, but Lord —— got there no sooner.

But, if it be natural for one accustomed to no superior in his own country to wish to see more of a similar class in other nations, it is unnatural for him to submit to the association under the penalty of losing his own self-respect. Very few of our people, certainly, are seen at all in English drawing-rooms, and fewer still, in those of the great; but I think if these few had uniformly maintained the tone they ought, that fifty years would have brought about in our behalf, a juster state of feeling than actually exists.

All our colonial traditions go to prove the little estimation that was enjoyed by our forefathers in the mother country. The descendants of the same ancestors looked upon their American cousins even more coldly than "country cousins" are usually regarded. Perhaps this was the natural consequence of the political relations between the two countries. The violent separation has superadded positive dislike and distrust, and we have to contend with all these feelings in associating with the English. One must eat a peck of dirt, they say, and

look you, madam, I charge at least a quart of mine to this delay on the stairs.

I very well know there are would-be-philanthropists, and mawkish sentimentalists who will deny both my facts and my conclusions. As to the facts I specifically state to have befallen myself, you, at least, will believe them, and I ask with confidence if the anecdote I have just related is not eloquence itself, on the subject of the estimation in which we are held? Philanthropy is a very pretty thing to talk about, and so is sentiment, but they usually are not much gifted with either of a very pure quality, who deal with them most in phrases. That is the healthiest philanthropy which soonest and the most effectually cures an evil, and this can be best done by exacting for ourselves, all that we are willing to yield to others.

It is not easy for an American to imagine the extent of the prejudice which exists against his country in England, without close and long observation. One of its effects is frequently to cause those who were born on our side of the water, or who have connections there, to wish to conceal the fact. Two anecdotes connected with this feeling have come to my knowledge, and, I will relate them.

A gentleman of one of our well known families was put young in the British army. Circumstances favoured his advancement, until he rose early to a situation of high honour, and of considerable emolu-

ment. Speaking of his prospects and fortune, not long since, to a near relative, who mentioned the anecdote to me, he felicitated himself on his good luck, adding, "that he should have been the happiest fellow in the world, had he not been born in America."

An Englishman married an American wife, and their first child was born in the country of the mother. Alluding to the subject, one day, an American observed—"but you are one of us; you were born in the United States." Observing his friend to change colour, he asked him if he really had any feeling on the subject, when the other frankly admitted "there was so strong a prejudice against America, in England, that he felt a reluctance to own that he was born there."

All the Americans resident here give the same account of the matter, whatever may be their own feelings towards England. Captain Hall, I see, virtually admits the same, and although occasionally one meets with an Englishman who is disposed to deny it, I think there are few who do not allow the existence of the dislike, when they are on terms of sufficient intimacy to speak frankly. I lay stress on this matter, because any mistake on our part would be peculiarly awkward, and because a knowledge of the truth, in this particular, may clear the way to our inquiries on other subjects.

## LETTER VII.

TO THOMAS FLOYD-JONES, ESQ. FORT NECK.

WHEN we first arrived here from Paris, I was disposed to deny that the streets of London were as crowded as it is usual to pretend. My opinion was formed too soon. What was then true, is so no longer. London, or rather Westminster, in the height of the season, and Westminster out of the season, so far as the movement in the streets is concerned, are not the same town. When I was here in 1826, I saw no essential difference between Regent street and Broadway, as regards the crowd, but now, that we have passed the Easter holidays, every one appears to be at his post, and so far from having ever seen, any where else, the crowds of people, the display of rich equipages, the incessant and grand movement that adorn and bewilder the streets of London, I had never even pictured such a sight in my imagination. They who have not been here at this season of the year, know nothing of the place. There is a part of the day, between one and six, when it is actually a matter of risk for a pedestrian to cross the

streets. I live near Piccadilly, which is not wider than Broadway, if quite as wide, and I have occasion to cross it frequently. You know I am no laggard, and am not deficient in activity, and yet I find it convenient to make my first run towards a stand of coaches in the middle of the street, protected by which I take a fresh departure for the other side. Regent street is still worse, and there is a place at Charing Cross, that would be nearly impracticable, but for a statue of Charles II., which makes a capital lee for one on foot. As for Broadway, and its pretended throng, I have been in the current of coaches in what is called the city, here, for an hour at a time, when the whole distance was made through a jam, as close as any you have ever seen in that street for the space of a hundred yards. Broadway will compare with the more crowded streets of London, much as Chestnut street will compare with Broadway.

I frequently stop and look about me in wonder, distrusting my eyes, at the exhibition of wealth and luxury that is concentrated in such narrow limits. Our horses have none of the grand movement that the cattle are trained to in Europe generally, and these of London seem, as they dash furiously along, as if they were trampling the earth under their feet. They are taught a high carriage, and as they are usually animals of great size as well as fleetness, their approach is sometimes terrific. By fleetness, however, I do not mean that you, as a Queen's



county man, and one who comes of a sporting stock, would consider them as doing a thing "in time," but merely the fleetness of a coach horse. As to foot, I have little doubt that we can match England any day. I think we could show as good a stock of roadsters, both for draught and the saddle, but we appear to want the breed of the English carriage horse ; or, if we possess it at all, it is crossed, dwindled, and inferior.

The English coachmen do not rein in the heads of their cattle towards each other, as is practised with us, but each animal carries himself perfectly straight, and in a line parallel to the pole. I found this unpleasant to the eye, at first, but it is certainly more rational than the other mode, and by the aid of reason and use I am fast losing my dislike. The horses travel easier and wider in this way than in any other, and when one gets accustomed to it, I am far from certain the action does not appear nobler. The superiority of the English carriages is equal to that of their horses. Perhaps they are a little too heavy ; especially the chariots ; but every thing of this sort is larger here than with us. The best French chariot is of a more just size, though scarcely so handsome. You see a few of these carriages in New York, but, with us, they are thought clumsy and awkward. One of our ordinary carriages, in Regent street, I feel persuaded would have a mob after it, in derision. There is something steam-boatish in the motion of a fine English

carriage—I mean one that is in all respects well appointed—but their second class vehicles do no better than our own, though always much heavier.

The men, here, are a great deal in the saddle. This they call “*riding* ;” going in a vehicle of any sort is “*driving*.” The distinction is arbitrary, though an innovation on the language. Were one to say he had been “*riding*” in the park, the inference would be inevitable, that he had been in the saddle, as I know from a ludicrous mistake of a friend of my own. An American lady, who is no longer young, nor a feather-weight, told an acquaintance of hers, that she had been *riding* in the Bois de Boulogne, at Paris. “Good Heavens !” said the person who had received this piece of news, to me, “does Mrs. — actually exhibit her person on horseback, at her time of life, and in so public a place as the Bois de Boulogne ?” “I should think not, certainly ; pray why do you ask ?” “She told me herself that she had been ‘*riding*’ there all the morning.” I defended our countrywoman, for our own use of the word is undeniably right. “Why if you *ride* in a coach, what do you do when you go on a horse ?” demanded the lady. “And if you *drive* in a carriage, what does the coachman do, *out* of it ?”

The English frequently make the *abuse* of words the test of *caste*. Dining with Mr. William Spencer, shortly before we left Paris, the subject

of the difference in the language of the two countries was introduced. We agreed there was a difference, though we were not quite so much of a mind, as to which party was right, and which was wrong. The conversation continued good humouredly, through a *tête-à-tête* dinner, until we came to the dessert. "Will you have a bit of this *tart*?" said Mr. Spencer. Do you call that a *tart*,—in America we should call it a *pie*." "Now, I'm sure I have you—here, John," turning to the footman behind his chair," what is the name of this thing?" The man hesitated and finally stammered out that he "believed it was a pie." "You never heard it called a *pie*, sir, in good society in England, in your life." I thought it time to come to the rescue, for my friend was getting to be as hot as his *tart*, so I interfered by saying—"Hang your good society—I would rather have the opinion of your cook or your footman, in a question of pasty, than that of your cousin the Duke of Marlborough."

To put him in good humour, I then told him an anecdote of a near relative of my own, whom you may have known, a man of singular readiness and of great wit. We have a puerile and a half-bred school of orthoepists in America who, failing in a practical knowledge of the world, affect to pronounce words as they are spelt, and who are ever on the rack to give some sentimental or fanciful evasion to any thing shocking. These are the gentry that call Hell Gate, Hurl Gate, and who are at

the head of the *rooster school*. A person of this class appealed to my kinsman to settle a disputed point, desiring to know whether he pronounced "quality," "*qual-i-ty*," or "*quol-i-ty*." "When I am conversing with a person of quality," she answered gravely, "I say *quol-i-ty*, and when with a person of *qual-i-ty*, I say *qual-i-ty*." As the wit depended in a great degree, on the voice, you will understand that he pronounced the first syllable of *qual-i-ty*, as *Sal* is pronounced in Sally.

You will be very apt to call this digression *bolting*, a *qual-i-ty* that a true Long Islandman cordially detests. *Revenons à nos moutons*.

I have told you that the men are a great deal in the saddle in London. The parks afford facilities for this manly and healthful exercise. It is possible to gallop miles without crossing one's track, and much of the way through pleasant fields. But galloping is not the English pace. The horses appear to be hunters, with a good stride, and yet it is quite rare that they break their trot. The common paces are either a fast trot or a walk. During the first, the rider invariably rises and falls, a most ungraceful and, in my poor judgment, ungracious movement, for I cannot persuade myself a horse likes to have a Mississippi sawyer on his back. Nothing is more common than to see a man, here, scattering the gravel through one of the parks, leaning over the neck of his beast, while the groom follows at the proper distance, imitating his master's

movements, like a shadow. I have frequently breakfasted with young friends, and found three or four saddle-horses at the door, with as many grooms in waiting for the guests, who were on the way to one or the other of the Houses. Nothing is more common than to see fifteen or twenty horses, in Old Palace Yard, whose owners are attending to their duties within.

We appear to possess a species of saddle horse that is nearer to the Arabian, than the one principally used here. The colours most frequent are a dull bay and chesnuts, very few of the true *sorrels* being seen. It was said the other day, that this word was American, but Lord H——n replied that it was a provincial term, and still in use, in the north, being strictly technical. Johnson has “Sorel; the buck is called the first year a fawn; the third a *sorel*.” He cites Shakspeare as authority. Can the term, as applied to a horse, come from the resemblance in the colour? I leave you to propound the matter to the Jockey Club.

England is a country of proprieties. Were I required to select a single word that should come nearest to the national peculiarities, it would be this. It pervades society, from its summit to its base, essentially affecting *appearances* when it affects nothing else. It enters into the religion, morals, politics, the dwelling, the dress, the equipages, the habits, and one may say all the opinions of the nation. At this

moment, I shall confine the application of this fact to the subject before us.

It would not be easy to imagine more appropriate rules than those which pervade the whole system of the stable in England. It is so perfect, that I deem it worthy of this especial notice. One might possibly object to some of the carriages as being too heavy, but the excellence of the cattle and of the roads must be considered, and the size of the vehicles give them an air of magnificence. What would be called a *showy* carriage is rarely seen here, the taste inclining to an elegant simplicity, though, on state occasions at court, carriages do appear that are less under laws so severe.

The king is seldom seen, but when he does appear it is in a style as unlike that of his brother of France, as may be. I have witnessed his departure from St. James's for Windsor, lately. He was in a post-chariot, with one of his sisters, another carriage following. Four horses were in the harness, held by two postillions, while two more rode together, on horses with blinkers and collars, but quite free from the carriage, a few paces in advance. Four mounted footmen came in the rear, while a party of lancers, cleared the way, and another closed the *cortège*. There was no *piqueur*. He went off at a slapping pace. On state occasions, of course, his style is more regal.

Five and twenty years since, families of rank often went into the country with coaches and six, followed

by mounted footmen. I have seen nothing of this sort, now. Post chariots and four are common, but most people travel with only two horses. The change is owing to the improvements in the roads. It is only at the races, I believe, that the great "turn outs" are now made.

Most of the fashionable marriages take place in one of two churches, in London; St. James's, Piccadilly, or St. George's, Hanover Square. We are at no great distance from the first, and I have several times witnessed the Hegiras of the happy pairs. They take their departure from the church door, and the approved style seems to be post-chariots and four, with the blinds closed, and postillions in liveries, wearing large white cockades, or bridal favours. The sight is so common as to attract little attention in the streets, though I dare say the slightest departure from the established seemliness might excite newspaper paragraphs.

You have not the smallest conception of what a livery is. A coat of some striking colour, white, perhaps, covered with lace, red plush vest and breeches, white stockings, shoes and buckles, a laced round hat with a high cockade, a powdered head and a gold-headed cane constitute the glories of the footman. A shovel-nosed hat and a wig, with a coat of many capes spread on the hammercloths, in addition, set up the Jehu. Two footmen behind a carriage seem indispensable to style, though more appear on state ceremonies. Chasseurs belong rather

to the continent, and are not common here. But all these things are brought in rigid subjection to the code of propriety. The commoner, unless of note, may not affect too much state. If the head of an old county family, however, he may trespass hard on nobility. If a *parvenu*, let him beware of cockades and canes! There is no other law but use, in these matters, but while an Englishman may do a hundred things that would set an American county in a ferment of police excitement, he cannot encroach on the established proprieties, with impunity. The reckless wretch would be cut as an Ishmaelite. Vanity sometimes urges an unfortunate across the line, and he is lampooned, laughed at, and caricatured, until it is thought to be immoral to appear in his society.

The arms are respected with religious sanctity; not that men do not obtain them clandestinely as with us, but the rules are strictly adhered to. None but the head of the family bears the supporters, unless by an especial concession; the maiden appears in the staid and pretty diamond; the peer in the coronet; not only every man, woman and child seems to have his or her place, in England, but every coach, every cane, and every wig!

Now, there is a great deal that is deadening and false, in all this, mixed up with something that is beautiful, and much that is convenient. The great mistake is the substitution of the seemly, for the right, and a peculiar advantage is an exemption from



confusion and incongruities, which has a more beneficial effect, however, on things than on men. But, I forget; we are dealing with horses.

England is the country of the wealthy. So far as the mass can derive benefits from the compulsory regulations of their superiors (and positive benefits, beyond question, are as much obtained in this manner, as fleets and armies and prisons are made more comfortable to their *personnels* by discipline) it may expect them, but when the interests of the two clash, the weak are obliged to succumb.

The celebrated division of labour, that has so much contributed to the aggrandizement of England, extends to the domestic establishments. Men are assorted for service, as in armies; size and appearance being quite as much, and in many cases more, consulted, than character. Five feet ten and upwards, barring extraordinary exceptions, make a footman's fortune. These are engaged in the great houses; those that are smaller squeeze in where they can, or get into less pretending mansions. All the little fellows sink into pot-boys, grooms, stable-men, and attendants at the inns. The English footman I have engaged, is a steady little old man, with a red face and powdered poll, who appears in black breeches and coat, but who says himself that his size has marred his fortune. He can just see over my shoulder, as I sit at table. If my watch were as regular, as this fellow, I should have less cause to complain of it. He is never out of the way, speaks

just loud enough to be heard, and calls me master. The rogue has had passages in his life, too, for he once lived with Peter Pindar, and accompanied Opie in his first journey to London. He is cockney born, is about fifty, and has run his career between Temple Bar and Covent Garden. I found him at the hotel, and this is his first appearance among the quality, whose splendour acts forcibly on his imagination. W—— caught him in a perfect ecstasy the other day, reading the card of an Earl, which had just been given him at the door. He is much contemned, I find, in the houses where I visit, on account of his dwarfish stature, for he is obliged to accompany me, occasionally.

It is a curious study to enter into the house, as well as the human, details of this capital. As caprice has often as much to do with the decisions of the luxurious as judgment, a pretty face is quite as likely to be a recommendation to a maid, as is stature to a footman. The consequence is, that Westminster, in the season, presents as fine a collection of men and women, as the earth ever held within the same space. The upper classes of the English are, as a whole, a fine race of people, and, as they lay so much stress on the appearance of their dependents, it is not usual to see one of diminutive stature, or ungainly exterior, near their dwellings. The guards, the regiments principally kept about London, are picked men, so that there is a concentration of fine forms of both sexes to be met with in the streets.

The dwarfs congregate about the stables, or mews as they are called here, and, now and then, one is seen skulking along with a pot of beer in his hand. But in the streets, about the equipages, or at the doors of the houses, surprisingly few but the well looking of both sexes are seen.

As strangers commonly reside in this part of the town, they are frequently misled by these facts, in making up their opinions of the relative stature of the English and other nations. I feel persuaded that the men of England, as a whole, are essentially below the stature of the men of America. They are of fuller habit, a consequence of climate, in a certain degree, but chiefly, I believe, from knowing how and what to eat; but the average of their frames, could the fact be come at, I feel persuaded would fall below our own. Not so with the women. England appears to have two very distinct races of both men and women; the tall and the short. The short are short indeed, and they are much more numerous than a casual observer would be apt to imagine. Nothing of the sort exists with us. I do not mean that we have no small men, but they are not seen in troops as they are seen here. I have frequently met with clusters of these little fellows in London, not one of whom was more than five feet, or five feet one or two inches high. In the drawing-room, and in public places frequented by the upper classes, I find myself a medium-sized

man, whereas, on the continent, I was much above that mark.

In America it is unusual to meet with a woman of any class, who approaches the ordinary stature of the men. Nothing is more common in England, especially in the upper circles. I have frequently seen men, and reasonably tall men too, walking with their wives, between whose statures there was no perceptible difference. Now such a thing is very rare with us, but very common here ; so common, I think, as to remove the suspicion that the eye may be seeking exceptions, in the greater throngs of a condensed population, a circumstance against which it is very necessary to guard, in making comparisons as between England and America.

It is a received notion that fewer old people, in proportion to whole numbers, are seen in America, than are seen here. The fact must be so, since it could not well be otherwise. This is a case in point, by which to demonstrate the little value of the common-place observations of travellers. Even more pretending staticians frequently fall into grave blunders of this sort, for the tastes necessary to laboured and critical examinations of facts, are seldom found united with the readiness of thought, and fertility of invention, that are needed in a successful examination of new principles, or of old principles environed by novel circumstances. No one but an original thinker can ever write well, or very usefully of America, since the world has

never before furnished an example of a people who have been placed under circumstances so peculiarly their own, both political and social. Let us apply our reasoning.

To be eighty years old one must have been born eighty years ago. Now eighty years ago, the entire population of America may have been about three millions, while that of England was more than seven. A simple proposition in arithmetic would prove to us, that with such premises, one ought to see more than twice as many people eighty years old in England, than in America; for as three are to seven, so are seven to sixteen and one-third. Setting aside the qualifying circumstances, of which there are some, here is arithmetical demonstration, that for every seven people who are eighty years old in America, one ought to meet in England with sixteen and one third, in order to equalize the chances of life in the two countries. The qualifying circumstances are the influence of immigration, which, until quite lately, has not amounted to much, and which perhaps would equal the allowance I have already made in my premises, as England had actually nearer eight than seven millions of souls, eighty years since: and the effect of surface. I say the effect of surface, for a mere observer, who should travel over a portion of America equal in extent to all England, would pass through a country that, eighty years ago, had not probably a population of half a million, and this

allowing him, too, to travel through its most peopled part.

The comparative statistical views of Europe and America, that have been published in this hemisphere, are almost all obnoxious to objections of this character, the writers being unable to appreciate the influence of facts of which they have no knowledge, and which are too novel to suggest themselves to men trained in other habits of thinking.

I see no reason to believe that human life is not as long in our part of America, as it is here, and, on the whole, I am inclined to believe that the average of years is in our favour. I do not intend to say that the mean years of running lives is as high with us, as it is here, for we know that they are not. The number of children, and the facts I have just stated, forbid it. But I believe the child born in the state of New York, *cæteris paribus*, has as good a chance of attaining the age of ninety, so far as climate is concerned, as the child born in Kent, or Essex, or Oxford, and so far as other circumstances are concerned, perhaps a better. The freshness of the English complexion is apt to deceive inconsiderate observers. This, I take it, is merely the effect of fog and sea air, and, except in very low latitudes, where the heat of the sun deadens the skin, as it might be to protect the system against its own rays, is to be seen every

where, under the same circumstances. There is something in the exhalations of a country newly cleared, beyond a question, unfavourable to health, and this the more so, in latitudes as low as our own; but I now speak of the older parts of the country, where time has already removed this objection. I can remember when it was not usual to see a woman with a good colour, in the mountains around C——n, while it is now unusual to find girls with a finer bloom than those of the present generation. At my residence at Angevine in West-Chester, a few years since, I could count ten people more than ninety years old, within ten miles of my own door. One of them had actually lived as a servant in the family of Col. Heathcote, of whom you know something, and who figured in the colony, at the close of the seventeenth century; and another was Mr. Augustus Van Cortlandt, a gentleman who drove his own blooded horses, at the ripe years of four score and ten. The old servant actually laboured for my oldest child, making five generations of the same family, in whose service she had toiled.

The notion of the comparative insalubrity of our climate, however, is not quite general, for, making a call, the other day, on Lady Affleck, a New York woman well advanced in life, she expressed her conviction that people lived to a greater age in America, than in England ! She had been making inquiries after the members of the old colonial

gentry, such as Mrs. White,\* John Jay, Mr. John de Lancey, Mrs. Izard, Mr. Van Cortlandt, Mr. John Watts, Lady Mary Watts, and divers others, most of whom were octagenarians, and several of whom were drawing near to a century. It appeared to me that the good old lady wished herself back among them, to get a mouthful of native air.

Though Westminster, in the season, has the peculiarities I have mentioned, I do not think that the population of London, as a whole, is remarkable for either size or freshness. I have elsewhere said that, in my opinion, Paris has the advantage of London in these particulars, though certainly not in good looks. The English female face is essentially the same as the American, though national peculiarities are to be observed in both. It is a delicate office to decide on the comparative personal charms of the sex in different communities, but as you and I are both beyond the hopes and fears of the young, on this point, a passing word is no more than a tribute due to the incontestible claims of both. Were it not for the females of Rome, I should say that the women of England and America might bear away the palm from all other competitors, on the score of personal charms, so far as we are familiarly acquainted with the rest of the world. There is a softness, an innocence, a feminine sweetness, an expression of the womanly virtues, in the

\* This lady is just dead, in her ninety-ninth year.



Anglo-Saxon female countenance, that is met with only as an exception, in the rest of Christendom. As between the English and American divisions of this common race, I think one may trace a few general points of difference. The English female has the advantage in the bust, shoulders, and throat. She has usually more colour, and, on the whole, a more *delicacy* of complexion. The American is superior in general delicacy of outline, as well as in complexion; she has a better person, bust and shoulders excepted, and smaller hands and feet. Those who pretend to know much on this subject, and to make critical comparisons, say, that it is usual to see most truly *beautiful* women in England, and most *pretty* women in America. Real beauty is an exception every where, and it must be remembered how much easier it is to find exceptions in a crowded population, than in one scattered over a surface as large as a third of Europe. Of one thing I am certain; *disagreeable* features are less frequently met, among the native females of America, than among any other people I have visited. I must hesitate as to the points of *beauty* and *prettiness*, for, judging merely by what one would see in London and New York, I think there is truth in the distinction. The English women appear better in high dress, the Americans in demi-toilettes. One other distinction, and I shall quit the subject. I have remarked that faces here, which appear well in the

distance, often fail in some necessary *finesse* or delicacy, when closer, and I should say, as a rule, that the American female, certainly the American girl, will bear the test of examination better than her European rival. I do not mean, by this, however, under a fierce sun, that direful enemy of soft eyes, for there is scarcely such a thing as a bright sun, or what we should call one, known in England.

It would pollute this page, were I to return to the horses. I may, however, say, for the subject is, to a degree, connected with the ladies, that sedan chairs appear to have finally disappeared from St. James's street. Even in 1826, I saw a stand of them, that has since vanished. The chairs may still be used, on particular occasions, but were Cecilia now in existence, she would find it difficult to be set down in Mrs. Benfield's entry, from a machine so lumbering. Thank God ! men have ceased to be horses ;—when will the metamorphosis be completed by their relinquishing the affinity to the other quadruped ?

## LETTER VIII.

TO EDWARD FLOYD DELANCEY, ESQ.

LONDON justly boasts of her squares and parks. The former are both more numerous and more beautiful than are to be found in any other town; and, while Vienna has its Prater, Paris its Bois de Boulogne, and Berlin, Munich, Dresden, Brussels, and, indeed, nearly every capital of Europe, its particular garden, or place of resort, none of them offer the variety, range, and verdure, of the parks of this great town. As compared with their size, the smaller capitals of Germany perhaps possess this advantage in an equal degree with London; but the inhabitants of Leipsig, Dresden, or Munich, cannot enjoy the circuit and broad expanse of fields that are met with here. There are said to be eighty squares alone in this huge town, to say nothing of its parks.

You are too young to know much, even by report, of the London of the last century; but the squares, rendered nearly classical by the better novels of that period, are, I believe, with one soli-

tary exception, already without the pale of fashion. I can remember Soho when it was still the residence of people of condition ; but that and Leicester Square, with Lincoln's Inn Fields, the largest area of the sort in London, are now all abandoned to business. St. James's still maintains its character, owing, probably, to its position near the palace. Norfolk-house, the town-dwelling of the first peer of the realm, is in this square, as is also that of the Duke of St. Albans. In a country as aristocratical as this, in which there are but some twenty nobles of this high rank, the presence of a single duke will suffice to leaven the gentility of a neighbourhood. In this manner does Northumbeland-house, standing on the confines of trade, serve as an outpost to protect the eastern flank of the *beau quartier*, extending its atmosphere a little beyond itself, in a sort of diluted fashion.

Norfolk-house,\* on the street, (I have never entered it), shows a front of nine windows, I believe, differing but little in externals from one of our own dwellings, with the difference in length. There is one feature, however, in our architecture, that distinguishes it almost invariably from that of Europe. Here the details are on the same dimensions as the building. Thus a house of nine windows would not be exactly three times as long as one of three, but probably something longer. Houses of three or four windows in front, which are common

\* George III. was born in this house. See Wraxall.

enough in London, if intended for good abodes, are usually on a larger scale than our own: the fact that even a small building can get a noble aspect by fine details, being better understood here than with us. We multiply, but seldom enlarge rooms, though the size and proportions are indispensably necessary to effect.

Norfolk-house has neither court nor gate, and, of course, it can be entered only by crossing the side-walk, as with us; a circumstance that, of itself, does away with most of its air of grandeur. A private palace that is well known to me at Florence, has thirty-three windows in front, besides being built around a court!

I have been in but one house in St. James's Square, which belongs to Lord Clanricarde, though now occupied by Lord Wellesley. It is a house of the size, style, and appearance of one of our own better sort of town residences, with the difference I have named; that of having rather nobler details. The practice of living on the first floor, enables the English to take into the better rooms the whole width of the building. This practice prevailed with us thirty years since, when our architecture, like our society, was less ambitious, but in better taste than it is to-day. There may be in London, possibly, a hundred dwellings that, in Paris, might be called hotels, and which are deemed, here, worthy to bear names. They belong principally to the higher nobility, for I fancy it would be deemed

social treason for a commoner to erect such an abode. Among them are Northumberland, Devonshire, Norfolk, Apsley, Lansdowne, Marlborough, Westminster, Bridgewater, Spencer, and Burlington-houses, &c. &c. &c. Neither of these dwellings would be considered first-rate on the continent of Europe; especially in Italy; nor do I think either is as large as the President's house; though the residence of the Duke of Northumberland may be an exception. The unfinished building intended for the Duke of York, and which, since his death, has been purchased by the Marquis of Stafford, promises to be one of the noblest dwellings of London, and is truly a palace.\*

It strikes me there is a sort of arbitrary line run between the quarters of London, following the direction of Regent's street. There are many squares on the eastern side of this thoroughfare, and some good streets, but rank and fashion appear to avoid them. When I was here in 1826, Mr. Canning facetiously asked, in parliament, if any one knew where Russell Square might be, and the question was thought to be derogatory to its standing. Still Russell, Bedford, Bloomsbury, and one or two more squares in that vicinity, are among the finest in London. They are chiefly occupied, I fancy, by people in the professions, or in trade. Cavendish, Hanover, St. James's, Grosvenor, Portman, Berke-

\* Now Sutherland-house; the Marquis of Stafford having been raised to the rank of Duke of Sutherland.

ly, and Manchester, are the squares most affected by people of condition. I presume a *parvenu*, who should wish to get into one of these squares, would have to make his advances with caution ; not that houses may not be bought, or built, but because opinion draws arbitrary distinctions, on all these matters, in England. This feeling is inherent in man, and we are far from being free from it. If a person of one of our own recognized but impoverished families were to become rich suddenly, no one would think it extraordinary that he set up his carriage and extended his mode of living ; for, by a sort of general but silent consent, it would be admitted there was a fitness in it ; while the entirely new man would be commented on and sneered at. Institutions are of no avail in such matters, opinion being stronger than law. Mankind insensibly defer to the things and persons to whom they are accustomed. There is some just and useful sentiment, mingled with a good deal of narrow prejudice, in this feeling, and it should be the aim of those who influence opinion, to distinguish between the two ; neither running into a bigotted exclusion, nor indulging in those loose and impracticable theories, that only tend to impair the influence of those who are capable of refining and advancing the tone and tastes, and frequently the principles, of society, without finding a substitute.

The English squares do not differ essentially from our own, though the houses around them are

generally larger and more imposing, and the enclosures are usually laid out with a stricter adherence to taste in landscape gardening. I know of nothing on the continent of Europe of precisely the same nature, the squares there being usually, if not invariably, without trees, enclosures, or verdure.

The parks of London are four; St. James's, the Green, Hyde, and Regent's. The two first lie side by side, and their corners are separated from that of Hyde Park by Piccadilly only, so that in passing from one to the other, one is always in the fields; and Kensington Gardens, again, which differs from the parks only in the nature of the plantations, lie adjacent to the further extremity of Hyde Park. The latter alone contains nearly four hundred acres of land, and I should think a space of near, or quite, seven hundred acres lies, here, in contiguous fields and gardens, covered with what may almost be termed eternal verdure.

Regent's Park is at some distance from the others, though in a quarter inhabited by the upper classes, for, while London has so many areas for the enjoyments of the affluent, it is worse off than common, in this respect, in the quarters of the humble. An improvement of quite recent date, has entirely changed a portion of the capital. Carlton House, the former residence of the Prince of Wales, has been pulled down, and an opening made into St. James's Park, in a style resembling



the French. Here is a *place*, or square, without verdure, which is surrounded by magnificent club-houses, and is called Waterloo Place. At this point Regent's street commences, running a distance of near two miles, though not exactly in a straight line. The deviations in the direction are made by means of architectural devices, that rather aid than impair the effect. The *coup d'œil* of this street is noble, and almost unequalled, though it is faulty in details, and mean in materials. The latter objection may be made to most of the modern improvements of the town, stuccoed bricks being used very generally, and sometimes in the public edifices. When the stucco stands, as it does pretty well in London, the appearance is better than that of the naked bricks however, and by far the greater portion of the towns of Europe are stuccoed, though usually on stone. It is only in Italy that one sees much true magnificence, and even there stucco is quite common. The best hotels of Paris, however, are of hewn stone.

The whole of Regent street is lined by buildings, erected in *blocks*, so as to resemble hotels, or palaces. The architecture is Grecian, varying between the several streets, no two *blocks* being exactly alike, perhaps; and many of them having columns, though none that project, or descend to the pavement. The buildings are chiefly used for shops, eating-houses, taverns, and other places of business. They are, in general, insignificant in depth, being

principally outside. Still, the general effect is noble, and it is much aided by the breadth, beauty, and solidity of the flagging. The carriage-way is M'Adamized.

Regent street, by a pleasing curvature, has been made to *débouche* in Portland Place, a short, but noble street, filled with plain, good dwellings. Portland Place, again, terminates at Regent's Crescent, where a series of beautiful enclosures commence. Here the houses are in circular colonnades, and passing them, you enter Regent's Park. This park better deserves the name of garden, as it is planted and decorated in that style, rather than in that of a park. It bids fair to be very beautiful, but is still too recent to develope all its rural charms. Certain favourites have been permitted to build in the park, and so long as this privilege shall be kept within proper limits, the effect will aid rather than impair the view. The Zoological Garden is also within the enclosure.

As the first peculiar object seen is apt to make the strongest impression, I ought perhaps to distrust my decision, but I think this collection, as yet, much inferior in taste, arrangement, and animals, to the *Jardin des Plantes*. It will, however, most probably improve fast, for no nation enjoys facilities equal to England to advance such an end. The whole of Regent's Park, a distance of about a mile and a-half, is encircled by a broad, smooth road, or drive, and this-again is, in part,

enclosed by rows of dwellings in terraces. These terraces stand a little back from the road, have carriage-sweeps and shrubbery in front, and are constructed on identified plans, so as to make a dozen dwellings resemble a single edifice. The material and designs are much like those of Regent street, though the scale is grander. Occasionally an isolated building breaks the uniformity of the arrangement, and prevents monotony.

The climate of London, a few of the summer months excepted, in the way of nerves and sensations, is any thing but pleasant. But the mists, when they do not degenerate to downright smoke and fogs, have the merit of singularly softening and aiding the landscape character of its scenes. I have driven into the Regent's Park, when the fields, casting upward their hues, the rows of houses seen dimly through the haze, the obscure glimpses of the hills beyond, the carriages rolling up, as it were out of vacuum, and the dim magnificence with its air of vastness, have conspired to render it one of the most extraordinary things, in its way, I have ever beheld.

There is a point near White-Hall, too, where I have stood often, to gaze at the dome of St. Paul's throwing up its grand outlines in the atmosphere of vapour, looking mystical and churchly. Such are the days in which I most like to gaze at London, for they carry out the idea of its vastness, and help to give it the appearance of an illimitable

wilderness of human abodes, human interests, and human passions.

Many of the views from the bridges are rather striking, though in this particular, I think Paris has the advantage. Having an occasion to make a call on a member of the Admiralty, I found him in Somerset-house, in rooms that overlook the river. The day was clearer than usual, and my acquaintance pointed out to me views, which embraced the windings of the Thames, the noble bridges, the fields of roofs and chimneys, with a back ground of verdant hills, in Surrey, that might be deemed fine, for any town. Still it is the eternal movement, the wealth, the endless lines of streets, the squares and parks, and not its scenery, that characterize London. There is another peculiarity that, for most of the year, one cannot help feeling here. I mean the chilling dreariness of the weather, without, as it is contrasted to the comfort of an English home, within. There is not more of the latter than with us, perhaps, but there is so much more of the former, as to bring the warmth, coal-fires, carpets, and internal arrangements of the dwellings, into what may be truly termed a *high relief*. As we ordinarily find the best agriculture in inhospitable climates, and the richest inventions of man under circumstances that have called loudest for their exercise, so do I suspect that the far-famed comfort of England, within doors, owes its existence to the discomfort without.

Of the climate, I have not a word to say that is favourable. In America we have very cold and very hot weather ; perhaps four months of the year are decidedly uncomfortable, from one or the other of these causes ; though the cold being usually a dry, honest cold, may be guarded against, and be borne ; and the cold certainly with us, is commonly weather that is exhilarating and otherwise healthful. The remaining eight months are such as are not surpassed, and hardly equalled, in any part of Europe, that I have visited. I should divide our New York weather in some such manner as this. Between November and March, there may be found, in all, a month of uncomfortable cold ; between March and May, another month of disagreeable weather ; between May and October, five or six weeks of lassitude, or of heat, that one could wish were not so, and then, I think, our positively bad weather is fully disposed of. The remainder of the year, under the necessary variations of the seasons, may be termed good.

I question if England can boast of half as much tolerable weather. I am aware that it requires long residences, and habits of comparison, to speak understandingly of climates ; and, perhaps, there is no point on which travellers are more apt to be influenced by their own feelings, than on this ; but, judging as much by the accounts of those who ought to know, as by my own experience, I

believe four months in the year would fully include all the weather, of this island, that a stranger would not find uncomfortably bad. I have been disappointed in the English spring. I do not say it is not better than ours of the northern states, for nothing, in its way, can be less genial than our spring; but, this at London, strikes me as much less pleasant than that we have passed at Paris, though even that was afflicted with what, the French call "*la lune rousse*."

There is much verdure, many beautiful flowers, and a fine foliage in the parks, it is true, but the days in which all these can be thoroughly enjoyed, are few indeed. 'This English weather strikes me as possessing the humidity of the sea-air, without its blandness. It is too often raw, penetrating to the heart and marrow, and leaving a consciousness of misery. The Neapolitan scirocco is scarcely more withering.\* In Paris the season advances more steadily and gracefully, and there are three months of progressive, calm, and stealthily increasing delight, until one has enjoyed all the gradations of vegetation between the bud, the blossom, and the leaf. With us the transitions are too rapid; in England they are accompanied by

\* Mr. Washington Alston was once asked, "what is a scirocco?" The celebrated painter pithily described it, as a "Boston east-wind BOILED." It is a great advantage to be able to take the spring weather of London *raw*; and raw enough it is, of a verity.

weather that constantly causes one to dread a return to winter.

June is *the* month of all this part of Europe. The Parisians extol their autumn, but it will not compare with our own. As for this island, between the first of October and January, it ought not to be inhabited. Nature has blessed me with a constitutional gaiety and a bouyancy of spirits, that are not to be mastered by trifles, but I have walked in the streets of this town, in certain conditions of the weather, when it appeared that every one I met was ready to point his finger at me, in mockery. At this season, in which we are now here, the verdure, and the trees in the parks, constantly invite one to walk, and yet there is rarely a day in which it is not pleasanter to be on the sunny side of the street. Still I prefer the English spring to our own, until we reach May, when, I think, we get the advantage. Mr. McAdam, who resided seventeen years in America, says, that in New York he was often very cold, whereas in England, he is almost always chilled. The distinction is significant, as between the bad seasons of the two countries.

As the town stretches along the parks, and contains so many squares, it is possible to ride, or *drive*, two or three miles, from a residence to Westminster-hall, without touching the stones, and almost without losing sight of verdure. Any one can enter Hyde Park on horseback, or in a car-

riage; hackney-coaches, stage-coaches, and the common vehicles excepted. This is the place usual for taking an airing. It is hardly necessary to say that, at certain times, the world does not afford similar exhibitions of taste, beauty, and a studied, but regulated magnificence, of the sort. Still carriages and four strike me as being less frequent, now, than they were in my youth. I think the taste for displays of this nature is lessening in England; though, within the limits set by usage, I perceive no falling off in the equipages, but rather an improvement in form and lightness.

The *road* around Regent's Park appears open to every thing; but into St. James's, none but the privileged can enter except on foot. The Green Park is exclusively for pedestrians, being little more than a pretty and extensive play-ground for children. Kensington Gardens can be entered by all properly dressed pedestrians.

These parks are in the custody of the crown, and the privilege of entering St. James's, on horseback, or in a carriage, is much coveted. Like every thing else that is exclusive, men pine to possess it. I was told, the other day, that Lord —, a nobleman, who in addition to his high rank, has filled many important offices in the ministry, cannot ride through this park, in going to or from the house, because he has had too much self-respect to solicit the favour; and they who regulate the matter, are too selfish and too narrow-



mind to accord it, unasked. But this is the history of favours all over the world, the mean and truckling always obtaining them, while they who depend solely on their services are overlooked, unless, indeed, their names and presence become necessary to those in power.

They have a story, here, that some man of mark, wishing to get this privilege was denied; the friend, through whom he had preferred the request, telling him "it was impossible to get permission for him to go through the park, but he could have him made an Irish peer, if he wished it."\*

Taking an airing, lately, with a friend, who is good authority in these matters, as indeed he is in others of a much higher character, he told me the following anecdote, pointing out, as we passed him, the hero of the story. A party was riding in Hyde Park, of whom all but one had the privilege of passing through St. James's. The excluded offered to take twenty guineas that he got through the horse-guards (the place where the unprivileged

\* Sir Nicholas Wrexall, in his *Posthumous Memoirs of his Own Times*, has probably given the true version of this tale. A person of the name of Philipps was denied a request to have a carriage-road from the park to his door, and to soften the refusal, Mr. Pitt offered him an Irish peerage, which he accepted. One hears of many grounds for an *illustration*, but this is the queerest on record; that of ennobling a man "because a carriage-sweep may not be made between St. James's Park and his door!—" *Comme vous violâ bati !*"

are stopped), while none of the others should. With this understanding, he boldly entered the tabooed grounds, and rode with the rest, until he got within a certain distance of the gate of the horse-guards. Here he trotted ahead, and whispered the sentinel that neither of the gentlemen coming had a right to pass, but that they intended to attempt it, under false names, and he advised him to be on the alert. The soldier was mystified by this communication, and suffered the rogue to go through, while the others were stopped of course.

It is not easy to appreciate the effects that exclusion, in these trifling matters, produces on graver things. National character gets to be affected by such practices, which create a sort of a dog-in-the-manger propensity. Foreigners, and I think not without reason, that the tone of English manners is injured by the system, for it renders the natives insensible to the claims of humanity, and especially to the obligations of hospitality. I have heard it said, that Mrs. —, the wife of an American minister, was once excluded from a seat that was thought desirable, in a private assembly, by women of condition, who maintained that if she were privileged at court, she was not privileged there. The effect of all exclusiveness in deportment, that is not founded on taste, or sentiment, is to render people low-bred and vulgar; as the effect of all exclusiveness in institutions, which is purely factitious, is to depress the mass

without elevating the superiors. I, myself, have seen English women of quality spread their petticoats on a seat, when ——— and ——— were approaching it, in order to prevent their obtaining places, and manifest an alarm that was quite superfluous, as both of those whom they wished to exclude were too much accustomed to good company, to think of bringing themselves unnecessarily in contact with people who betrayed so gross an ignorance of its primary laws.

“Were you at the drawing-room,” asked Sir ———, of me, a fortnight since. I had not been. “You were wise, for, really, these things occur so rarely, now, that the press is nearly insupportable. Many were compelled to wait hours for their carriages, and some were obliged to trudge it afoot, both going and coming.” I mentioned that I had been told this difficulty would have been obviated by my going through rooms less thronged. “You mean by the private entrance.—Oh! But that is a privilege excessively difficult to be obtained, I do assure you; Lady ———, who went that way, had to exert all her influence; and it is a thing not to be had without a *ridiculous degree of favour*.”—“I was told by our *chargé*, that if I went, he would take me by some private entrance that is devoted to the diplomatic corps. You will remember that I should have to be presented.”—“Ah! true; in that way it might *possibly* have been done.”

And he looked *ridiculously* envious of a foreigner who enjoyed this small privilege.

There is a diplomatic tradition that one of our ministers complained to our own government, of the treatment his wife received at court even, and a pithy anecdote is current concerning the mode in which Mr. Jefferson avenged her. It is not easy to see in what manner a minister can resent the slights of ordinary society ; perhaps the best method would be to send his family to Paris, where it would be certain to meet with good-breeding, at least, and ask permission to visit it, from time to time, in a way that would leave no doubt of the cause. But a slight that proceeded from the court, ought to be met promptly. If a spirited remonstrance did not procure redress, the minister should ask his recall, and assign his reason. Were such a thing to occur once, in a case that was clear, and our government were to decline filling the mission, because it could ask no citizen to take a family into a country where its feelings were not properly regarded, the principle would be settled forever. If there ever was a nation that can afford to take high ground, in a matter like this, it is our own ; for we are above fear, have no need of favour, and cannot accept of rewards. No people was ever more independent in its facts ; would to heaven it were equally so in its opinions ! If a case of this nature should occur, the trading part of the community would raise an

outcry, lest it should derange commerce, the administration would probably be frightened by their clamour and the dignity of the republic would be abandoned, although the bone and sinew of the nation, when properly called on, would be ready and willing to maintain it. Still the dignity and the policy of a country are inseparable.

## LETTER IX.

TO JAMES STEVENSON, ESQ.

SOME favourable accidents have thrown me lately, more than I had a right to expect, in the circumstances under which I have visited England, into the society of the leading whigs. At dinner at Lord Grey's, I have met Lord Holland, Lord Lauderdale, Lord John Russell, Lord Duncannon, Lord Althorp, Lord Durham, and many men of less note, though all of the same way of thinking. Were it permitted to relate what passes when one is admitted within the doors of a private house, I could amuse you, beyond a question, by repeating the conversation and remarks of men of whom it is matter of interest to learn any thing authentic, but neither of us has been educated in a gossiping school. Still, without violating propriety, I may give you some notions of my distinguished host.

Lord Grey, notwithstanding his years, for he is no longer young, retains much of the lightness and grace of a young man, in his form. He is tall, well-proportioned, and I should think had once been suf-

ficiently athletic, and there is an expression of suavity and kindness in his face, that report had not prepared me to see. He struck me as being as little of an actor in society, as any public man I have ever seen. Simple and well-bred, such a man could hardly escape being, but in Lord Grey's simplicity, there is a nature one does not always meet. He is not exactly as playful as Lord Holland, who seems to be all *bonhomme*, but he sits and smiles at the sallies of those around him, as if he thoroughly enjoyed them. I thought him the man of the most character in his set, though he betrayed it quietly, naturally, and, as it were, as if he could not help it. The tone of his mind and of his deportment was masculine. I find that the English look upon this statesman with a little social awe, but I have now met him several times, and have dined twice with him at his own table, and so far from seeing, or rather *feeling*, any grounds for such a notion, I have been in the company of no distinguished man in Europe, so much my senior, with whom I have felt myself more at ease, or who has appeared to me better to understand the rights of all in a drawing-room. I can safely say that his house is one of the very few in England, in which something has not occurred to make me feel that I was not only a foreigner, but *an American*. Lord Grey expressed no surprise that I spoke English, he spared me explanations of a hundred things that are quite as well understood with us as they are

here, manifested liberality of sentiment without parade, and, on all occasions, acted and expressed himself precisely as if he never thought at all of national differences. His company was uniformly good, and as it was generally composed of men of rank, perhaps I fared all the better for the circumstance. *Castes* have a tendency to depress all but the privileged, and the losers are a little apt to betray the "beggar-on-horseback" disposition, when they catch one whom they can patronise or play upon. There was not the least of this about the manner of Lord Grey.

You may be curious to know in what the difference consists between the manner of living in a house like this, of which I am speaking, and in one of our own that corresponds to it, in social position. We have essentially larger and better houses than many of the town residences of the English nobility. Our rooms are, however, too apt to want height and dimension, for where we increase the number of the apartments these people increase the size. Almost every dwelling of any pretensions in London has a stone stair-case, and, although they are not to be compared to those of Paris, (the few great houses here, excepted) they give the arrangements a certain air of solidity and richness. In the other marbles, I think, on the whole, we have the advantage; though regular architects controlling that, which, with us, is too often left to a mere mechanic, I should think violations of taste and propriety do



not as often occur in the domestic ornaments of the English, as in our own.

Our old practice of having the reception rooms on the first-floor, and the dining-room below, is very general in London, the only exceptions being in the comparatively few houses whose size admits of rooms *en suite*. Of course the stairs are more in use here than with us. This sadly impairs the effect, for nothing can be worse than to be obliged to climb and descend a long narrow flight of steps, in going to or from the table : I am wrong ; it is worse to eat in a room that is afterwards used to receive in.

The English furnish their houses essentially as ours are furnished. French bronzes, clocks, &c., and, indeed, all continental and Chinese ornaments are perhaps less common, but they use much more furniture. The country practice of arranging the furniture, in a prim and starched manner, along the walls, is, I believe, rather peculiar to America, for both in France and England a negligent affluence of ottomans, sofas, divans, screens and tables of all sorts, appears to be the prevailing taste. I was lately in a drawing-room, here, in which I counted no less than fourteen sofas, *causeuses*, *chaises longues*, and ottomans, scattered about the room, in orderly confusion. The ottoman appears to be almost exclusively English, for it is rarely seen in Paris, whereas a drawing-room is seldom without one in London. I do not remember ever to

have met with one in America, at all. In the wood and silks of furniture, I think we rather excel the English, although it is not as usual to find magnificence of this sort, carried out with us, as it is here. Capt. Hall is unquestionably right, when he says our mode of furnishing is naked, compared to that of England, though the little we have is usually as handsome as any thing here.

I have been much struck with the great number and with the excellence of the paintings one sees in the English dwellings, for, in Paris, a good picture is rarely to be found out of the galleries and the palaces. I should think Rome, alone, can surpass London in this particular.

The offices of the London residences are much more extensive than with us, for, besides occupying a substratum of the house itself, they quite often extend into the yard, where they are covered with a large skylight. I am inclined to think the lodging rooms, generally, not as good as ours. The English get along with moderately-sized town-houses, all the better perhaps from their habits, for the young men quit the paternal roof early, it being usual to put them on allowances, and to let them go at large.

I have heard extraordinary things concerning the distance that is maintained between friends in England, and the *ménagement* that is necessary in conducting intercourse even between the members of the same family. One who ought to know from his official position, a foreigner in charge of a diplo-

matic mission, has assured me a son cannot presume to go unceremoniously and dine with a father, but that invitations are always necessary, and that the forms of society are rigidly observed between the nearest connexions. There is a secondary and an imitative class, (in England it is very numerous) of whom I can believe any absurdity of this nature, for they caricature usages, breeding, forms, and even principles. These are the people who talk about eating cheese, and drinking beer and port, and lay stress on things insignificant in themselves, as if manners, and taste, and elegance were not far more violated in their fussy pretensions, than they would be in emptying one of Barclay's big butts. In other words, this is the silver-fork school, of whom one has heard a good deal in America, the gentry who come among us, in common, having little other claims to a knowledge of the world than that they have thus obtained at second hand, as the traditions of fashion, or perhaps in the pages of a novel.

I do not say that among the crowd of genteel vulgar that throng the capital of a great empire like this, a pretty numerous array of silly pretenders of this description may not be made, but it will not do to receive these people as the head of society, or, indeed, as a very material portion of it. As a rule, I certainly think mere drill passes for more in London than in most other capitals. This arises, in part, from the manner in which the whole nation is

drilled, each in his station, from the valet to the master; but, in a social sense, chiefly, I think, because the same arbitrary distinctions do not prevail in England as elsewhere in Europe, nobility being, in most other countries, an indispensable requisite for admission into the great world. Certainly, as between Paris and London, the advantage in this particular is in favour of the former, where good sense, at all times, appears to regulate good breeding; but, notwithstanding, I am far from attributing to the English all the follies of this nature that it is the fashion to impute to them.

Nothing can have been more simple and unaffected than the intercourse between father and son, that I have witnessed here. It would be improper for a son, having a separate establishment, to come at unseasonable hours to the house of any father, who is in the habit of receiving much, for it might occasion an awkward inconvenience; and if one is bound to treat ordinary friends with this respect, still more so is he bound to manifest the same deference to his own parents.

I have been amused in tracing the many points of resemblance that are to be found between our own manners and those of the English. I should say the off-hand and familiar way in which the seniors of a family address the juniors, is one. Dining the other day with Lord S——, who has filled high ministerial appointments, when the ladies had retired, he said to his eldest son, a man older than I am, and a

leading member of parliament, "Jack, ring the bell."\* I will not say that this is precisely American simplicity, but it is the way your father and mine would have been very apt to speak, under the same circumstances, and I think it is a manner which belongs to all that portion of our people who really come of the Middle States.

Seated at a table like Lord Grey's, with the company I met there, I have been led to look around me, in quest of the points of difference, by which I could have known that I was not at home. Putting the conversation aside, for that necessarily was English as ours would have been American, it would not have been easy to point out any very broad distinctions. The dining-room was very much like one of our own, in a good house. There was a side-board which stood in a recess, with columns near it. The furniture was a little plainer than it might be with us, for an eating-room in Europe is seldom used for any other purpose. The form and arrangements of the table were very like, with a slight difference in the width of the table itself, ours, in the narrow cramped houses it is now so much the fashion to build, usually wanting width. We dined off of plate, a thing so rarely done in America as to form a substantial difference. The footmen were powdered and in showy liveries, and

\* Jack was shortly after made Chancellor of the Exchequer.

the butler was in black. The latter might still be seen at home, but three or four footmen in livery, in the same house, I have never witnessed but once. But remove the cloth, and send the servants away, and I think any one might have been deceived. As the party around this table was composed of men of high rank, and still higher personal consideration, it would be unfair to compare them with the wine-discussing, trade-talking, dollar-dollar, set that has made an inroad upon society in our commercial towns, not half of whom are educated, or indeed Americans; but I speak of a class vastly superior, which you know, and which, innovated on as it is by the social Vandals of the times, still clings to its habits and retains much of its ancient simplicity and respectability. Between these men, and those I have met at the table of Lord Grey, and at one or two other houses, here, I confess I have been almost at a loss to detect any other points of difference, than those which belong to personal individuality.

In the phrases, the intonation of the voice, the use and pronunciation of the words, it was not easy to detect any points of difference, although I have watched attentively, for a whole evening. The manner of speaking is identically the same as our own, (I speak now of the gentlemen of the Middle States) direct, simple and abbreviated. There is none of the pedantry of "I can not," for "I can't," "I do not," for "I don't," and all those school-boy and boarding-school affectations, by

which a parade is made of one's orthography. These are precisely our own good old New York forms of speech, and, knowing the associations and extraction of those who formed the school, I have always suspected it was the best in the country. I do not mean, however, to exclude from it the same classes in all the other Middle States, and that portion of those in the Southern who live much in the towns. Communion with the world is absolutely necessary to prevent prig-ism, for one insensibly inclines to books in a solitude, getting to be critical and fastidious about things that are better decided by usage than by reason.

The simple and quiet manner of addressing each other that prevails here, helps to complete the resemblance. The term "my Lord," is scarcely ever uttered. I do not think that I have heard it used by gentlemen, six times since I have been in London, though the servants and all of the inferior classes never neglect it. I should say the term "my lady," is absolutely proscribed in society. I have heard it but three times, since I have been in Europe, although one scarcely sees less of the titled English in Paris, than in London. These three cases are worth remembering, since they mark three different degrees of manners. It was used, or rather the phrase "your ladyship" was used by Sir ——, a physician, who evidently wanted the tone of one accustomed to associate with equals. It was used by Mrs. ——, an American (we are a little

apt to be *ultra* in such things) at Paris, and I saw a daughter of "my lady" turn her head to conceal a smile. Thirdly, and lastly, it was used by Sir ———, a dashing young baronet, to Lady ———, in a sort of playful emphasis, as we should dwell on official appellations, in grave and sounding pleasantries.

Of course, there is more or less of fashion in all this ; nor should I be surprised, ten years hence, to find it indispensable to breeding, to be punctilious the other way ; so much depends on the mode of doing these things, that any custom of this nature can be brought into vogue, or be condemned. Still, there is so much inherent good taste in simplicity, that, I think, no very laboured exhibitions of the sort, can ever long maintain themselves.

One seldom repeats the terms "your Majesty," and "Royal Highness," in ordinary conversations with sovereigns and princes, any more than one is always saying "your Excellency" and "your Honour" in talking with the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts ; the only two functionaries in America, I believe, who have legal styles of address. In France it is usual to say "*sire*," "*oui sire*," and "*non sire*;" but, here, I am told, for I never have had any personal communication with an English prince, it is the practice to say, "sir." The English have rather an affectation of saying that "one uses 'sir,' only to the king and to servants." This word is much less



used by the English than with us, as it is much less used by people of the world in America, than by those who, either from living retired, or from not having access to society, are not people of the world. It is, however, a good word, and can be thrown in, occasionally, into American conversation with singular grace and point, though, like other good things it may be overdone. The coxcomb who refrains altogether from using it, with us, in deference to the cockney pandects of the Brummel school, shows neither "blood nor bottom."

I can remember when our old staid ladies used to address the servants as "sir;" but then a servant, being a negro, had something respectable and genteel about him, for it was before he had lost both by too much intercourse with the European peasants who are superceding him. One might indeed say "sirrah," to the new set, but "sir" would be apt to stick in his throat. The philosophy of the practice is obvious enough. In the mouth of one who uses this little word understandingly, it marks distance mingled with respect: used to a superior, the respect is for him; used to an inferior, the respect is for one's self.

It has been cleverly and wittily said that, in America, we have a tolerably numerous class, who deem "nothing too high to be aspired to, and nothing too low to be done." In making my comparisons with any thing and every thing on this side of the Atlantic, I keep these pliant persons en-

tirely out of view. They can be justly compared to nothing else in human annals. They are the monstrous offspring of peculiar circumstances, and owe their existence to an unparalleled freedom of exertion, acting on the maxims of a government that is better understood in practice than in theory, and, which, among its thousand advantages, is obnoxious to the charge of giving birth to a species of gentry perfectly *sui generis*. I compare the gentlemen of no country to these philosophers.

On the continent of Europe, it is rather a distinction to be undecorated in society. Stars and ribbands are really so very common, that one gets to be glad to see a fine coat without them. As mere matters of show, they are but indifferent appendages of dress, unless belonging to the highest class of such ornaments, when indeed their characters change; for there is always something respectable in diamonds. Here it is quite the reverse. You probably may not know that birth, of itself, entitles no one to wear a decoration.\* A king, as king, wears his crown and royal robes, but he wears no star, or ribband, or collar. A peer has his coronet, and his robes as a peer, but nothing else. The star and ribband are deemed the peculiar badges of orders of chivalry, and they vary according to

\* "Decoration" is the proper word, I believe, for the badges of an order; the French, however, frequently term them *crachats*, or *le crachat du roi*, the king's spittle!

the institution. The ribband is worn across the breast, like a sword belt, though usually it is placed under the coat. It is broad, and blue appears to be the honourable colour. At least the "blue ribband," and the "*cordon bleu*," are in most request in France and England, belonging to the orders of the Garter and of the Holy Ghost. The *Legion d'Honneur* and the Bath both use red ribbands. There are gorgeous collars and mantles to all the orders, for occasions of ceremony, but in society one seldom sees more than the ribband and the star, and not often the former. The garter at the knee is sometimes used also.

Lord Grey has no decoration ; neither has Lord Lansdowne, nor Lord Holland. Lord Lauderdale, the day I dined in his company in Berkely Square, wore a star, being a knight of the Thistle ; Lord Spencer wore that of the Garter. These two are almost the only instances in which I have seen Englishmen in society, appearing with decorations, in London, though I have frequently seen them in Paris. The difference, in this respect, is striking on coming from the continent. The ribband at the button-hole is very rarely, if ever, used here. The star, of course, only when dressed for dinners and evening entertainments, or on state occasions. It was formerly the practice, I believe, to appear in parliament with stars, but it is now very rarely done.

I tell you these things, since, as they do exist, it

may be well enough to have some tolerably distinct notions as to the manner. With the exception of the Bath, the orders of this country are commonly conferred on personal favourites, or are the price of political friendships. There appear to be orders that are pretty exclusively confined to men of ancient and illustrious families, while others, again, have the profession of distinguishing merit. In England, the Garter, the Thistle, and St. Patrick's, belong to the former class, and the Bath to the latter. You will, at once, imagine that the last stands highest in the public estimation, and that it is far more honourable to be a knight of the Bath, than to be a knight of the Garter. This would be the case were reason stronger than prejudice, but as it is not, I leave you to infer which has the advantage.

I had a little aside with one of the guests at Lord Grey's, in the course of the evening, on the subject of the characters of the reigning family. It is true my informant was a whig, and the whigs look upon George IV. as a recreant from their principles ; but this gentleman I know to be one worthy of credit, and singularly moderate, or I should not repeat his opinions.

Speaking of the king, he described him as a man more than commonly destitute of good faith. A sovereign must be of a singularly upright mind, not to be guilty of more or less duplicity, and of this my acquaintance seemed perfectly aware ; but

George IV., he thought, lent himself with more than common aptitude to this part of the royal *rôle*. He mentioned an anecdote as illustrative of the treachery of his character.

Some forty years since the debts of the Prince of Wales became so pressing as to render an application to parliament necessary for relief. By way of obtaining the desired end, it was promised that 'like Falstaff' he would "repent, and that suddenly," and take himself a wife, to insure an heir to the throne. There was a report, however, that he was already privately married to Mrs. Fitz-Herbert. Although such a marriage was civilly illegal, by the laws of the kingdom, many well meaning, and all right-thinking people believed it to be binding in a moral and religious point of view, and as parliament was not absolutely destitute of such men, it became necessary to pacify their scruples. With this view Mr. Fox is said to have demanded authority of the Prince to contradict the rumour, if it might be done with truth. This authority he is understood to have received in the fullest terms, and it is certain Mr. Fox pledged himself to that effect, in his place in the house. After all, it is now confidently affirmed, the Prince was actually married to Mrs. Fitz-Herbert, and I was told Mr. Fox never forgave the gross act of duplicity by which he had been made a dupe.

The Duke of York was spoken of, as a well meaning and an honest man, but as one scarcely on

a level with the ordinary scale of human intellect. Neither he nor his brother, however, had any proper knowledge of *meum* and *tuum*, a fault that was probably as much owing to the flatterers that surrounded them, and to defective educations, as to natural tendencies.

My informant added, that, George III. and the Duke of York excepted, all the men of the family possessed a faculty of expressing their thoughts, that was quite out of keeping with the value of the thoughts themselves. The Duke of Kent he said formed an exception to the latter part of the rule, being clever; as, though in a less degree, was the Duke of Sussex. Having so good a source of information, I was curious to know how far the vulgar rumours which we had heard of the classical attainments of the present king were to be relied on. To this question my companion answered pithily, "he may be able to write good Latin, but he cannot write intelligible English." I have seen a letter or two, myself, which sufficiently corroborate the latter opinion, for if one were to search for rare specimens of the rigmarole, he might be satisfied with these. George III. did little better.

As the conversation naturally turned on the tendency to adulation and flattery in a court, and their blighting influence on the moral qualities of both parties, my companion related an instance so much in point, that it is worth repeating. A Scotch officer, of no very extraordinary merit, but who had

risen to high employments by personal assiduity and the arts of a courtier, was in the presence of George III., at Windsor, in company with one or two others, at a moment when ceremony was banished. That simple-minded and well-meaning monarch was a little apt to admit of tangents in the discourse, and he suddenly exclaimed "D——, it appears to me that you and I are just of a height—let's measure, let's measure." The general placed his back to that of the king, but instead of submitting to the process of measurement, he kept moving his head in a way to prevent it. Another tangent drew the king off, and he left the room. "Why didn't you stand still, and let him measure, D——," asked a looker-on. "You kept bobbing your head so, he could do nothing." "Well, I did'n't know whether he wanted to be taller, or shorter."

George III. has got great credit, in America, for his celebrated speech to Mr. Adams, whom he told "that he had been the last man in his kingdom to consent to the independence of America, and he should be the last man to call it in question, now it was admitted." If he ever made such a declaration, it was a truly regal speech, and of a character with those that are often made by sovereigns, who, if wanting in tact themselves, draw on those around them for a supply. It is now generally understood that the answer of Charles X., when he appeared at the gates of Paris in 1814, as Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, where he is made to say, "that

nothing is changed, except in the presence of another Frenchman," was invented for him, by a clever subordinate, at the suggestion of M. de Talleyrand.\* The dying speech of Dessaix, was put into his mouth by the First Consul, in his despatches I believe, for the Duc de —, who stood at his side when he fell, assured me that the ball passed through his head, and that he died without uttering a syllable.

*"Is not the truth, the truth?"*

It would seem not.

*\* Je la revois enfin, et rien n'y est changé, si ce n'est qu'il s'y trouve un Français de plus.*



## LETTER X.

TO WILLIAM JAY, ESQ., BEDFORD, N. Y.

I REMEMBER that some five and twenty years ago, you and I had a discussion on the supposed comparative merits of parliament and congress, considering both strictly as legislative bodies. I say supposed, for it was pretty much supposition, since you had never been out of your own country, and although I had actually been twice in England, and even in London at that time, it was at an age so young, and under circumstances so little favourable to obtaining the knowledge necessary to such a subject, that I was no better off than yourself, as to facts. It is true we had both read speeches attributed to Lord Chatham and Mr. Burke, and Fox and Pitt, and sundry other orators, and which were written by Dr. Johnson and his successors in the grinding line, but this was a very different thing from having looked, and listened, and judged for oneself. In short, we did, what most young men of our age would probably have done, under the same circumstances ; we uttered valueless opin-

ions in an oracular manner, convincing no one but ourselves, and positively edifying nobody.

I thought of this discussion, which was longer even than a speech in congress, occupying no small portion of the Christmas holidays in the country, as I first put foot in the room in which were assembled the Commons of England.

I went down to St. Stephen's about six o'clock, and, passing through divers intricate ways, I finally reached a place where a man stood in a sort of box, like the box-office keeper in a theatre, with the difference that the retailer of places in the gallery of the House of Commons carried on his business in an open and manly manner, there being no necessity for peeping through a hole to get a sight of his face. I am not quite certain that this is not the only thing connected with parliament, that is not more or less mystified.

Having paid my half crown, I was permitted to go at large in a small room with a high ceiling. Out of this room ascended some flights of narrow steps, mounting which, I reached a narrow lobby, that communicated by two doors in front with the gallery of the House, and by two doors at its ends, with little pent-up rooms, which I afterwards found answered as a sort of reporters' guard rooms. There was also a little door in front, between the two principal entrances, by which the reporters alone went in and out of the gallery.

I found the chapel badly lighted, at least so it

seemed from above. There might have been fifty or sixty members present, more than half of whom belonged to the ministerial side of the house, and not a few of whom were coming and going pretty assiduously between Bellamy's and their seats. Bellamy's is the name of the legislative coffee-house, and it is in the building.

The speaker sat buried in a high chair, a sort of open pulpit, under a canopy, with an enormous wig covering his head and shoulders. He looked, by the dim light, like a feeble attenuated old man, or old woman, for really it was not easy to say which; but his "*order*, ORDER," was uttered in a potent bass voice, and in a sort of octave manner, that I have attempted to describe in writing. Whether this ominous mode of calling to order was peculiar to the office, or to the man, I cannot tell you, but quite likely the former, for there is an hereditary deference for such a thing here, as well as for a wig.

The members sat with their hats on, but the speaker was uncovered, if a man can be said to be uncovered who is buried in tow. They sit on benches with backs of the ordinary height, and I counted six members with one foot on the backs of the benches before them, and three with both feet. The latter were very interesting attitudes, a good deal resembling those which your country buck is apt to take in an American bar-room, and which I have seen in a church. I do not mention these trifles to draw any

great moral, or political consequences from them, but simply because similar things have been commented on in connection with congress, and ascribed to democracy. I am of opinion political systems have little to do with these *tours de forces*, but that there is rather a tendency in the Anglo-Saxon race to put the heels higher than the head.

Behind the speaker's chair, two members were stretched at full length, asleep. I presume the benches they occupied were softer than common, for two or three others seemed anxiously watching the blissful moment of their waking, with an evident intention to succeed them. One did arise, and a successor was in his place in less than a minute. That I may dispose of this part of the subject, once for all, I will add that, during the evening, three young men came into the side gallery within fifteen feet of me, and stretched themselves on the benches, where they were not visible to those in the body of the house. Two were disposed to sleep, rationally, but one of them kept pulling their coats and legs in a way to render it no easy matter, when all three retired together laughing, as if it were a bad job. I should think neither of the three was five and twenty.

I have now given you an exact account of the antics of the House of Commons on my first visit, and as I made a note of them on the spot, or rather in the lobby, to which we were driven once, in the course of the evening; and shall merely add that, so

far as my experience goes, and it extends to a great many subsequent visits, they rather characterize its meetings. I leave you to say whether they render the legislature of England any worse or any better, though, for my own part, I think it a matter of perfect moonshine. The only times when I have seen this body in more regulated attitudes, have been occasions when the house was so crowded as to compel the members to keep their legs to themselves.

As respects the cries, so much spoken of, some of them are droll enough. Of the "Hear, hear, hear," I shall say nothing, unless it be to tell you that they are so modulated as to express different emotions. There is a member or two, just now, that are rather expert in crowing like a cock, and I have known an attempt to bleat like a lamb, but I think it was a failure. I was quite unprepared for one species of interruption, which is a new invention, and seems likely to carry all before it, for a time. Something that was said excited a most pronounced dissatisfaction among the whigs, and they set up a noise that was laughably like the qua-a-cking of a flock of ducks. For some time I did not know what to make of it—then I thought the cry was "Bar, bar, bar," and fancied that they wished a delinquent to be put at their bar; but I believe, after all, it was no more than the introduction of the common French interjection "bah!" which signifies dissent. The word is so sonorous,

that twenty or thirty men can make a very pretty uproar, by a diligent use of it.

You will ask what the speaker says to these interruptions? He says "*order ORDER*,"—and there the matter ends. I shall say nothing against these practices, for I do not believe they essentially affect the interests of the country, and, as Fuseli used to tell his wife, when she got in a pet—"*Schwear*, my dear—do; *schwear* a little, it will do you good," it may be a relief to a man to break out occasionally in these vocal expressions of feeling, especially to those who cannot, very conveniently to themselves, say any thing else.

No business of importance was done the night I paid my first visit, although some discussion took place on one or two financial points. Lord Althorp spoke for a few minutes, and in a manner so hesitating and painful, that I was surprised at the respectful attention of the House. But I was told he has its ear, from the circumstance of its having faith in his intentions, and from a conviction that, although he has hard work to get at it, he has really a fund of useful and precise information. He is one of the most laboured and perplexed speakers I have ever heard attempt to address a deliberative body. Mr. Peel said a few words in reply, sufficient to give me an idea of his manner, though I have since frequently heard him on more important occasions.

The voice of Mr. Peel is pleasant and well

modulated; he speaks with facility, though in a slightly formal manner, and with a measured accentuation that sometimes betrays him into false prosody, a fault that is very common with all but the gifted few, in elocution. He called "opinion," for instance, this evening, "*o*-pinion," and "occasion" "*o*-casion." If there were a word between persuasive and coaxing, I should select it as the one that best describes the manner of Mr. Peel. The latter would do him great injustice, as it wants his dignity, and argument, and force; and the former would, I think, do injustice to truth, as there is too evident an effort to insinuate himself into the good opinion of the listener, to render it quite applicable. One rather resists than yields to a persuasion so very obvious. It strikes me his manner savours more of *New* than of *Old* England, and I consider it a tribute to his reasoning powers and knowledge, that he is listened to with so much respect, for whatever may be the political and religious mystifications of the English, (and it would not be easy to surpass either), there is a homely honesty in the public mind, that greatly indisposes it to receive *visible* management with favour.

The voice of Mr. Peel is not unlike that of Mr. Wirt, though not as melodious, while his elocution is less perfect, and he has not the same sincerity. Still I know no American speaker to whom he can so well be compared. There is something about him between our eastern and southern modes of

speaking. Some of his soft sounds, those of the *u* for instance, were exaggerated, like those of one who had studied Walker instead of obtaining his pronunciation in the usual way, while others, again, came out naturally, and were rather startling to a nice ear.

Sir Francis Burdett spoke, for a few minutes, in the course of the evening. By the way, the English do not pronounce this name *Burdett*, but *Bur-dit*. He is tall and thin, more than ultra in height as in opinions, with a singularly long neck. In personal appearance, though rather handsome than otherwise, he is almost as much out of the common way as John Randolph of Roanoke. He had much less fluency and parliamentary neatness than I should have expected in one of so much practice, though he was quite self-possessed. I do not know whether you ever heard our old friend, Mr. James Morris of Morrisania, speak in public, but if you have, you will at once get an idea of the manner of Sir Francis Burdett. They have the same gentlemanlike deliberation—the same quiet, measured utterance—the same good drawing-room, or dinner-table tone, and a similarity in voice and enunciation that to me was quite startling.

Sir Francis Burdett, whose name once filled all mouths in England, no longer attracts much political attention. He probably struck his first notes on too high a key, not to fall into an octave below, before the air was finished. Your true and lasting



melody steals slowly on the ear, commencing with more modulated strains, and rising gradually with the feelings that the sounds awaken. Luther, who has left a steadily increasing impression on the world, would probably have shrunk with horror, at first, from the degree of reformation to which he finally arrived by slower and more certain means. It may also be questioned if Sir Francis Burdett had a mind sufficiently original, or a reason logical enough, either to conceive or to maintain the reform that England needs, and, sooner or later, will have, or take revolution in its stead.

Mr. Hume had something to say, too, during that portion of the debate which referred to some of the minor expenses of the government. He was respectfully heard, and had a business-like and matter-of-fact manner, that was adapted to catch the attention of those who wished for practical details. He seemed earnest and honest, and has as little of the demagogue in externals, as any man in the house; far less than Mr. Peel, who sat on the treasury bench. He has not the smallest pretension to eloquence, but speaks like a man who is indifferent to every thing but his facts, with which he seems to have made himself sufficiently acquainted by plodding investigation. A course like this may certainly be overdone, but in such a government it may also be eminently useful. There is a Scottish industry and perseverance about this member that are respectable, while they are not

without amusement to the observer of personal and national traits.

When the principal business of the night was disposed of, there came up a question that was admirably suited to draw out the true and prevailing character of the British parliament. It was a law relating to the servants of the country, and one which, of course, affected the interests and comforts of all who kept them. 'The legislature of this country controls the mightiest interests,' it is true, but it is under the direction of a very few minds, the *oi polloi* of the two houses merely echoing the sentiments of their leaders, in all such matters; but, when a question arises touching the pantry, or the chase, or the preserves, a chord is struck that vibrates through the legislative multitude, coming home to the knowledge and practice of every man who has a seat. Accordingly, this question called up a set of orators who are usually content to be silent.

I am far from undervaluing the importance of a sound and vigorous legislation on the subject of servants, for they stand in a very peculiar relation to their masters, and it would be well for all parties if we had rules of the sort among ourselves. But there was something ludicrous in seeing this important body gravely occupied in discussing this minute feature in domestic economy, and that, too, with an earnestness and zeal that had slumbered while the debate concerning taxation lasted.

One or two country members stammered through speeches of great nicety and erudition, and one man was carried away by such an ecstasy of admiration at the improvements of the country, that he boldly affirmed one might now travel through England and find silver forks and napkins in every inn ! By the way, if this be true, I have missed my road, for I saw nothing of the sort between Dover and London. Another speaker was clearly a little "how come you so," but this is by no means unusual in parliament, the papers having made five or six allusions to such scenes since I arrived here. I have twice witnessed these exhibitions. I believe they have been also seen in congress, in the night sessions; the Anglo-Saxon race having a propensity to lower the head as well as to raise the heels.

It would be unfair to cite this sitting as a specimen of what the House of Commons is, in its better moments, though I feel persuaded that the latter instances are the exceptions, while something very like what I have here told you, makes the rule. I do not believe that the average speaking of parliament is any better than that of the state legislature of New York ; though I beg you to understand that I am not about to abuse my opportunities to renew the old discussion to your manifest disadvantage. In making comparisons of this nature, it is usual to overlook several important and qualifying circumstances. The American legislative bodies are strictly the representatives of the nation, or of

certain geographical sections of the nation. In tone, intelligence, deportment and education, they are but a little above the average of their countrymen; if a small class, that comprehends the very debased and vicious, be excluded, possibly not at all. Parliament represents exclusively not only the rich, in the main, but the landed interest, and is composed, almost entirely, of men taken from the higher classes. Some of the consequences which one would naturally expect from such causes are certainly discoverable. The English of parliament, though far from faultless, is, on the whole, materially better than that of congress. It could hardly be otherwise, with the respective elements of the bodies we are comparing, and when we recollect, moreover, the manner in which population is compressed in England, and how much it is diffused in America. It is the friction of constant intercourse which gives its polish to society, and nothing could save us from downright rusticity but the activity of a circulation that is out of all the ordinary proportions of social communion. It may be too much to say that this active and altogether peculiar blending of persons is *polishing* America, but it is *chiselling* the whole surface of society down to a smoothness that destroys marked inequalities.

The House of Commons contains more than six hundred and forty members,\* whereas the House of

Representatives contains but about two hundred and twenty. Now a simple proposition in the rule of three, will demonstrate that the former ought to possess nearly three times as many good speakers as the latter, in order to be relatively on a level with it. I greatly question if it has as many, numerically speaking, alone. I believe that one hundred men can be found in congress, who would, on an emergency, make much better extemporaneous speeches, than one hundred of the best speakers in the House of Commons. As between the House of Lords and the Senate, when the relative numbers are considered, there is no comparison.

There is, however, another side to this question, that must not be overlooked. A large proportion of the English Commons are laymen, whereas a majority of Congress, perhaps, belong to a profession in which the art of debating, or something very near it, is cultivated as the means of subsistence. They lay great stress here on these distinctions, as an anecdote that I will relate may give you to understand.

The tories have recently made a great acquisition to their ranks, by the entrance of a Mr. Sadler into parliament. He has just delivered a speech that has made some noise, and which, if not literally so, is deemed to be maiden, in reference to its importance. Walking up St. James's street the day after Mr. Sadler spoke, I met Lord ———, a whig

member of the House of Commons. He asked me if I had been in the house the previous night, and then alluded to the effort of Mr. Sadler. "The tories are making a great noise about him," said Lord ———, "but we have found out that he is a *lawyer!* Every one thought, at first, he was a *country gentleman*, but, lo and behold! he turns out to be a lawyer!" It was not so easy, at first, to understand the connexion between the merits or demerits of Mr. Sadler's speech and his profession, but a little further conversation gave me the clue. In a social organization as factitious as this, things get to be estimated by their relations to the different phases of society. Success is *quoad hoc*. If a duke were to exhibit a picture, though no great things of itself, thousands would rush to see it, as a good thing for a duke. This spirit is particularly observable in literature; a book written by a lord selling almost as a matter of course, for his inferiors love to live, even in the equivocal familiarity of thinking, in communion with a nobleman. Byron owes no small portion of his popularity to his rank, for the better portions of his works are by no means suited to the common English tastes.

While one smiles at these distinctions, it must not be forgotten that they come fairly into the account in comparing the oratory of parliament and congress. If we urge on one side that the same conventional deportment and purity of pronunciation are not to be expected in an American as in an

English legislature, because one represents an entire community and the other an *élite*, we cannot refuse the plea that their system excludes a set of men trained to public speaking, while ours freely admits them. In brief, the question properly divides itself between the fact and its reasons. The fact, I believe, to be as already stated, and I think that some of the strongest qualifying circumstances on both sides, have here been enumerated.

You will be curious to know what may be the effect of the cheering and coughing system; or, perhaps it were better now to term it the *bah-ing* system. There can be no doubt that such practices open the door to abuses of a more serious character than those which arise from the liberty of talking by the day. One puts it in the power of a majority to stifle reason and suppress facts, while the other merely exhausts patience and consumes time. Now time is of much less importance to congress than to parliament, since the powers of the former extend only to certain great interests, while the latter, as I have just shown you, legislates even about the servants of the country.

It would be a great saving of time, and a great furtherance of justice, if there were established a tribunal at Washington, to sit constantly, whose sole business it should be to decide on private claims against the government. An appeal might lie to Congress, on the part of a public advocate appointed to protect the public interests, or it might even

be expedient to sanction all the decisions by enactments, but, in nineteen cases in twenty, I think, the two houses would take the reports of the tribunal as conclusive. The auditors, it is true, form some such judicial officers now, but the tribunal I mean would take cognizance of all the claims that at present go before Congress, and might be contested, if improper, by a law officer. We shall have such a court, in time, but not till we think less as Englishmen and more as Americans.

We are too apt to consider parliament and congress as bodies of similar powers, and, consequently, as recognising the same general legislative maxims. This error has led to some of the most serious evils to which our experience has given birth, and which, by insensible means, unless corrected in time, will sooner or later lead to a perversion of the governing principles of our own government.

Whatever may have been the ancient dogmas of the British constitution, parliament is now absolute. It is true that the executive, in theory, forms an integral part of parliament, but by gradual and constant encroachments on the authority of the crown, the ministers have become the creatures of parliament whenever the latter sees fit to assert its authority, although a majority of the latter is apt to be the creatures of ministers, in another and a more limited sense. The members are bought, it will be remembered, however, because they possess the power, and he who traffics away his au-



thority, in this mode, does not part with it entirely, but is merely turning it to his personal account. The only power in England that can resist parliament, is the body of the nation. As this is an extra-legal force, forming no part of the system, it is to be found everywhere, and is only more available in England than in Turkey, because the nation is more enlightened. It is in truth the only elementary check which exists on the action of the omnipotence of parliament, all the others extending no further than they can go by intrigue and management. This practical feature in her government, gives England some sort of claim to be considered a republic. Congress is composed of *attornies in fact*, for not only are its powers expressly limited, but such is the nature of the trusts, that any attempt to exceed them is a direct assault on the omnipotence of the constituency. With us the executive is as much representative as the legislature, the trustee of the power being a direct emanation of the popular will. To attempt to control him, then, in the exercise of his constitutional authority, is for an attorney named for one specific trust to attempt to discharge the duties committed to another, named for quite a different, and for an equally specific trust.

These are the general features of difference, which of themselves are sufficient to give birth to very different legislative maxims, and which *would* give birth to them, were not traditions, more effica-

cious, in such matters, than principles. But there are many minor points that frequently agitate us, and which are commonly settled on English principles, that are closely connected with a due consideration of the discrepancies between the two polities. I will illustrate my meaning, by an example.

The right of petition is justly esteemed an important English right, whereas with us, it may be made the instrument of doing infinite harm, while I question if a single case of its exclusive and particular usefulness, could be cited.

In England, the right of petition is the only regular mode by which the body of the nation can at all enter into the councils of the nation. Apart from the fact that the constituencies are arbitrarily wielded as mere political machinery, a vast majority of the English have not even this indirect, and inefficient control over the choice of their legislators. One body is hereditary, and the other is chosen by a striking minority, even in theory; and, in fact, by the influence of the aristocracy. Under such a system the right of petition is doubly useful, for while it serves as a lever for the mass, it also serves as a beacon to their rulers. A moderate and timely application of this force may prevent an exercise of it that would overturn the state.

The right to petition Congress existed entirely as a traditionary right, until the constitution was amended. Certainly any man, or any set of men could petition, as much as they pleased, but the

question now in consideration is whether there exists any governing and important principle that would render it incumbent on Congress to receive and consider their requests, had not Mr. Jefferson introduced his amendment. As the people are directly, fully and always recently, represented in Congress, there exists no plea on the score of the necessity of adopting this mode of being heard, as in England. Under such a system there is no danger of laws being passed, as in England, to prevent county meetings being called without the sanction of an officer of the government; and the people, if they wish it, have always the expedient of assembling when, where and how they please, to make their sentiments known. Congress has no power to pass any such a law at all. Parliament may curb the press, but Congress is absolutely impotent on this point. It was impotent, before the amendment existed, for all these provisions were supererogatory. The tendency of a government like ours, is to the doctrines of pledges and instruction, (neither of which is tenable as a whole, though true in part) and it would seem that they who claim a right to *instruct* can have little need to *petition*. But the objects of a petition can be better obtained by another mode of proceeding. If the people assemble in primary meetings, and put the subject of the petition into the form of a printed memorial, and cause their names to be published, such a document would be more likely to

effect its object, because it would be more authentic than the old method. It would be in the way of being read, so as to be understood, a fate which befalls few petitions, and names could not be surreptitiously annexed without exposure, as is constantly practised with petitions.

All this will probably appear very much like heterodoxy, and yet I think it all quite true. The subject might easily be extended to many other practices. You may feel disposed to ask, why Mr. Jefferson, a lover of independence, so far overlooked these distinctions as to obtain an insertion of a clause in the constitution, by way of amendment, securing the right of petition to the people? No man is omniscient; and Mr. Jefferson, having been educated under the monarchy, deferred more to its maxims, than would have been the case, had he lived later. But General Lafayette has explained to me the reason why several of the supererogatory clauses were introduced, in 1801. Mr. Jefferson was in Europe when the constitution was formed. This instrument was a subject of great interest to the liberals of this part of the world, who know little of the substratum of freedom which exists with us, in the state governments. It was an awkward thing to explain that Congress possessed no powers that were not expressly ceded, when he was asked where were our guarantees for liberty of conscience, and of the press, and for this right of petition, which,

in Europe, where the people cannot assemble without permission half the time, and are not directly represented, is justly deemed a right of the last importance. Under the feeling created by the constant inquiries that he heard on these points, Mr. Jefferson got the amendments, mentioned, introduced. At least, such is the history of the transaction that I have received from General Lafayette.

In ninety-nine cases in a hundred, petitions lead to no greater injury, with us, than to a waste of time. Indeed, they are getting to be rather unusual, the public feeling them to be unnecessary. It resorts to a higher power, being the master. But petitions may work peculiar evil, under a system like ours. If recognised as a right, it is a mode of entering Congress with vexed questions, over which Congress may have but a doubtful, or no proper control, and disturb, uselessly, the harmony of its councils. A single member may do this, also, it is true, but with less influence, and consequently with less injury. Petitions are a sort of semi-official consultation, and, besides letting the wishes of the whole, or of a part of the people be known, which can be, at least, as well effected by other means, they insidiously work their way into the debates, and enlist the passions, prematurely, on subjects that may require great forbearance to be disposed of wisely and with safety. It should always be remembered, among

other things, that instead of dealing with citizens, our government is often called on to deal with states. There is so strong a bias in men of reading to take warning from history, under the just persuasion, that human nature continues inherently the same, throughout all time, that they too frequently neglect to ascertain whether the facts are identical, in preaching their favourite doctrine, that "like causes produce like effects." •

Of course I now speak of petitions for political and general objects, and not of those introduced to obtain private favours. The word itself is unsuited to our form of government, and even in private cases, would be worthily displaced, by substituting "Memorial."

## LETTER XI.

TO JAMES E. DE KAY, ESQ.

I WAS passing through Pall Mall, shortly after the town became so crowded, when I saw a mermaid combing her hair before a small mirror, as the crest on a chariot that stood at a door, and I at once thought I recognised the arms of Sir Walter Scott. On examining nearer, I found the bloody hand, which left no doubt that the literary baronet was in town.

Among the persons whom a mistaken opinion that I was the son of ———, had brought to my door, was Sir G—— P——, a member of parliament, and a strong whig. This gentleman had the good nature not to drop me, when he found his error, but he proffered many civilities, which were commenced by an invitation to dinner.

I do not remember to have seen a house with exactly the same *entourage*, as that of Sir G—— P——'s. I had the street and number of course, but when I got near the place, I found nothing but

shops, or dwellings of an appearance that did not indicate the residence of an affluent baronet. At the precise number, however, I found such a door as one might have expected to meet ; and nothing but a door. It had pilasters, fan lights, a neat entrance, and a massive knocker, with two powdered and liveried footmen in waiting. Of course I gave the magical raps, the "open sesame" of London, and was forthwith admitted. "Pray, sir, does Sir G——P——, live here?" The answer was satisfactory, though *how* he lived was to me still a matter of wonder. An inner door was opened, and a long and wide passage lay before me. At the end of this, we found the apartments of the family, which appeared to be ample, and suited to the condition of my host. As it was half-past seven, I had no opportunity of ascertaining how the light was obtained, or what sort of objects one looked out upon by day-light, though in a subsequent morning visit, I thought, in this particular, London was a little outdone even in obscurity.

We had at dinner, on this occasion, Sir James M'Intosh, Mr. Spring Rice, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Dumont, a Swiss, known for his remarks on Mirabeau, and other works, and two or three ladies, besides a few gentlemen, connections of the family. I have little to tell you of the entertainment, except that Sir James M'Intosh conversed a great deal, and as usual, exceedingly well. The English do not strike me as being good talkers ; even when they



have more in them than the French, they appear to have less at command. Still, I think it possible to find, not a pleasanter perhaps, but a more masculine circle in this capital than in that of France. If it were possible to keep our sets distinct, we would not be very far behind them either, for, as a people, we are better talkers than the English, and our practical habits give us generally truer notions of more things than they are apt to possess; but, keeping sets distinct, in a town like New York, for instance, is much like stopping the flock, when a single sheep has escaped.

Sir James M'Intosh, to-day, was severe on some of the provisions of the common law, and frankly admitted that the English system cherished many gross absurdities merely on account of their antiquity. He alluded to the law of the half-blood, which he pronounced to be an atrocity. I ventured to say, that I thought there was one thing connected with the subject that was worse than the law itself, which was Sir William Blackstone's reason for it. At this he laughed, and made several pithy and sound remarks on the aptitude of men to take any absurdity on the credit of great names, and the disposition to find good reasons for practices, however irrational or unjust, that had got to form a part of our habits. I wished heartily that some of our "reading classes" had been present, that they might have heard the manner in which one who has been "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel,"

venerates their idols. Were I to seek those who entertain false and exaggerated notions of the merits of the "Three Estates," I should not look for them here, among men of reflection and education, but among the book-worms of America, or in that portion of our people, among whom the traditions of their emigrant fathers are still rife; and I would thus seek them, on the principle, that one who wished to see a fashion caricatured, would not look for an example in the streets of a great capital, but in those of a remote provincial town.

The fact is, the *seemliness* of England, its studied and calculated decencies, often deceive near observers, and it is no wonder that ardent admirers, at a distance, should be misled by so specious an outside. I remember just before leaving home to have had a discussion with an intimate friend, on the subject of close corporations. My friend, is as honest a fellow as breathes, and what is more one who loves his native land; not its cats and dogs, because they are *his* cats and dogs, or, in other words, he is not a Broad-way-patriot, but is a man who has a natural sentiment in favour of the land of his fathers, takes an honest pride in its history, looks forward to the future with hope, and has a manly appreciation of the leading and distinctive features of its institutions. But, with all these, and many other excellencies, he has rather a bookish predilection in favour of things that

have been prettily and coquetishly set forth in English literature. Among other crotchets of this nature, he had taken it into his head that, while it might be well enough to form a broad base for society in the main, close corporations were very good things, as wheels within a wheel. I remember that he particularly instanced the New York Hospital, in proof of the justice of his notions."

I believe the New York Hospital is almost the only institution we have, that possesses this privilege. Now it is a distinction to belong to any thing exclusive, and this circumstance, alone, has induced a class of men to accept the trust, who would not dream of it, were similar things common. This is one cause why the privilege is not abused. Another reason is, that the community gets a tone, either for good or for evil, by its prevalent habits, and the effects which flow from open corporations, and which must influence a solitary close corporation that happens to exist in their neighbourhood, would be superseded by the effects of close corporations were there more of the latter than of the former. As Rome was not built in a day, neither is one isolated fact to establish a theory.

I mention these things because the abuses of the English close-corporation-system was the subject of conversation, to-day, and I found the sentiment

very generally against them. Some reform is declared to be indispensable, in order to get rid of the corruption that has grown up under the practice.

I was the first to quit the table, after the hint was given, and, on entering the drawing-room, I found Sir Walter Scott seated on one side of an ottoman, and his daughter on the other. They were alone, as if they had just got through with the civilities of an entrance, and finding myself so near the great writer, I went up to him and asked him how he did. He received me so coldly, and with a manner so different from that with which we had parted, that I drew back, of course, both surprised and hurt. I next tried the daughter, but she was not a whit more gracious. There remained nothing for me to do, but to turn round and enter into conversation with an agreeable countrywoman, who happened to be present, and who by her simplicity and frankness made me amends for the caustic manner of her neighbour.

In a few minutes, I saw Sir Walter in the centre of a group composed of Sir James M'Intosh, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Dumont and Mr. Spring Rice. The expression of his countenance suddenly changed, and he held out his hand to me, in the same cordial way, in which he had stood on the landing of the hotel in the rue St. Maur. He had not recollected me, at first; and the extreme coldness of his manner probably proceeded from being overworked in society.

I had been much hurt, at the first reception, as you may well suppose, and as you will better understand, when I explain the cause. Indeed, I own, even after his assurance that he did not at all recall my features when I spoke to him, I felt tempted to remind him of the answer of Turenne, when he was struck by one of his valets who had mistaken his back for that of another servant—"and if I had been Pierre, you need not have struck so hard."

When in Paris, it appeared to me that Sir Walter Scott, in his peculiar circumstances, certainly *ought*, and possibly might reap some considerable emolument from his works, in America. The sheets were sold, I had understood, to the American publisher, but as an illiberal and unhandsome practice prevailed of reprinting on the American edition, the moment it appeared, and of selling it at a reduced price, it was not in the power of the publisher to pay any thing approaching what he otherwise would. Although the sum paid me for the sheets of a work in England, was of no great amount, in itself, yet compared with the value of the two articles, it seemed so much out of all proportion greater than what I had reason to believe Scott received from America, that I felt a sort of shame the fact should be so. I suggested therefore a plan by which I thought the state of things might be altered, and Sir Walter made to receive some small portion of that pecuniary reward for the pleasure

he bestowed, of which he was so much in want, and which he so well merited.

My plan was not to his liking, although I still think it the best, and he substituted one of his own. Under his suggestion, then, I had made an effort to effect our object, but it totally failed. My zeal had outrun discretion, and I was rightly punished, perhaps, for over-estimating my influence. I communicated this disappointment by letter, and I confess it had first struck me that some displeasure at the failure (though why I did not see, for the expedient adopted was purely his own) had mingled with his coolness. It seems I did him injustice, as his subsequent conduct fully proved.

In touching on this subject, I am induced to recollect the want of policy as respects ourselves, and the want of justice as respects others, of our copy-right law. We shall never have a manly, frank literature, if indeed, we have a literature at all, so long as our own people have to contend with the unpaid contributions of the most affluent school of writers the world has ever seen. The usual answer to this reasoning savours disgracefully of the spirit of traffic that is gradually enveloping every thing in the country in its sordid grasp. If a generous sentiment be uttered in favour of the foreigner who contributes to our pleasures, or our means of knowledge, it is thought to be triumphantly answered by showing that we can get for nothing, that for which we are asked to pay. But there is a much more seri-

ous objection, than that of a niggardly spirit, to be urged against the present system. The government is one of opinion, and the world does not contain a set of political maxims, or of social views, more dangerous to its permanency, than those which characterize the greater part of the literature of the country from which we import our books. I do not mean that our principles are more nearly approximated to those of Russia, for instance, than to those of England; but it is the very points of resemblance that create the danger, for where there is so much that is alike, we run the risk of confounding principles. I take it that the institutions of England have more to apprehend from the influence of our own, than from the influence of those of all the rest of the world united; and, *vice versa*, that we have, in the same proportion, more to apprehend from those of England. It is usual to say that the deference we pay to English maxims is natural, being the unavoidable consequence of our origin; all of which is quite true, but in continuing a system, by which this deference is constantly fed, we give it an unnatural and factitious duration. It is high time, not only for the respectability, but for the *safety* of the American people, that they should promulgate a set of principles that are more in harmony with their facts. The mawkish praise of *things*, that is now so much in vogue in America, is no more national, than are the eulogiums

which the trader lavishes on his wines, equally when he sells and when he drinks them.

These very works of Sir Walter Scott, are replete with one species of danger to the American readers ; and the greater the talents of the writer, as a matter of course, the greater is the evil. The bias of his feelings, his prejudices, I might almost say of his nature, is deference to hereditary rank ; I do not mean that deep feeling, which, perhaps, inevitably connects the descendant with the glorious deeds of the ancestor, and which every man of sentiment is willing enough to admit, as it is a beautiful feature in the poetry of life, but the deference of mere feudal and conventional laws, which have had their origin in force, and are continued by prejudice and wrong. This idea pervades his writings, not in professions, but in the deep insinuating current of feeling, and in a way, silently and stealthily, to carry with it the sympathies of the reader. Sir Walter Scott may be right, but if he is right our system is radically wrong, and one of the first duties of a political scheme is to protect itself.

It may be fairly enough answered, perhaps, that the influence of a writer of Scott's powers cannot properly be urged in settling principles, as one such pen in a century would be considered a prodigy. His case forms an exception, instead of a rule. We will grant this, and consider him then as one greatly below his real standard, but pos-



sessing the same peculiarity of feeling, for Sir Walter Scott is a great writer, not because he feels this deference for accidental rank, but in spite of it. His talents are a gift from nature, while his notions are the result of social position.

Now what would be the situation of a writer who should attempt, before the American public, to compete with even a diminished Scott, on American principles? He would be almost certain to fail, supposing a perfect equality of talent, from the very circumstance that he would find the minds of his readers already possessed by the hostile notions, and he would be compelled to expel them, in the first place, before he could even commence the contest on equal terms. As if this were not disadvantage enough, under the present conditions of the copy-right law, he would have to contend with a price bottomed on the possession of a literary waif.

There is no just application of the free trade doctrine to this question, for a fair competition does not suppose one of the parties to obtain his articles ready made to his hands. It is impossible that our literature should make head against these odds, and until we do enjoy a manly, independent literature of our own, we shall labour under the imputations which all foreigners urge against us, with more truth than is desirable, that of being but a second hand reflection of English opinions.

There is a morbid feeling in the American

public, it is true, which will even uphold an inferior writer, so long as he aids in illustrating the land and water, which is their birthright. This weakness has been publicly charged upon them, here, as resembling the love of property. The latter accusation is probably urged a little too much in an inimical spirit, but the press has fairly laid itself open to the imputation, for while it has betrayed a total and a most culpable indifference to the maintainance of American *principles*, and even of American character, it has manifested a rabid jealousy of the credit of American *things* !

The day after the dinner at Sir G—— P——’s, Sir Walter Scott did me the favour to call in St. James’s Place. His manner removed any doubts on the subject of the American experiment, for nothing could be more simple and natural than his whole deportment. He spoke of his embarrassments in a way that led me to believe he would soon remove them.\* On this subject he seemed cheerful and full of hope. “This fellow Napoleon,” he said, in his quiet, humorous manner, “has given me a good lift, and I am only too

\* Coupling this conversation with subsequent knowledge, the writer has been induced to think that Sir Walter Scott, at that time, was not aware of the extent of his own liabilities. He mentioned a sum that was greatly short of that reported to be due, soon after his death, and which held an equitable lien on the estate of Abbotsford.

well treated by my countrymen." I mentioned to him a remark of a French critic,\* in speaking of the Life of Napoleon. This person happened to be the only one, at a large dinner, who had read the book, and every body was curious to know what he thought of it. "Oh! it is a miserable thing," he said, "full of low images and grovelling ideas; just like Shakspeare." I thought he was sensitive on the subject, and changed the conversation.

I was on the point of mentioning to him another anecdote connected with this work, and which it will, at least, do to tell you. Shortly after it appeared, one of the French journals, the *Globe*, or the *Débats*, I forget which, in two or three consecutive articles, covered it with the eulogiums with which it was usual to receive the novels of the same author. In a few weeks public opinion in France took high ground against the book. The same journal now came out with a new *critique*, which commenced by saying, "that having originally received the Memoirs of Napoleon with the courtesy due to an illustrious name, and the French character, it was time to take an impartial view of it;" and then it set to work, in good earnest, to cut it up, as one would carve a pig!

I had just published a book, and Scott kindly

\* A man who has since filled one of the highest offices under the French government.

and delicately inquired whether it had been disposed of to advantage, in England. As compared with English books, it had not, certainly, though I thought it had done very well for a foreign book, written in a foreign spirit, and with no particular claims to English favour. He disavowed this feeling for his countrymen, and frankly offered to serve me with the publishers. As I had no cause to complain of the party into whose hands I had already fallen, but, on the contrary, reason to be satisfied, I could only thank him, and state the fact. As I am writing of England and English character, it is no more than fair to say that the peculiarities I have mentioned did much less to impair the popularity of this work, in England, than I did expect, or could have expected. There is a manliness and a feeling of pride, in the better character of the country, that singularly elevates it above this littleness, and, while I make no doubt a great many did feel this objection, I believe a majority did not. I much question, had the case been reversed, if either the French or the American public, would have received a book with the same liberal spirit. I have been so sensible of this, that I have felt a strong desire to manifest it, by taking a subject from the teeming and glorious naval history of this country. What a theme this would be for one sufficiently familiar with the sea ! An American might well enough do it, too, by carrying the time back anterior to the separation,

when the two histories were one. But some of their own seamen will yet bear away the prize, and although I may envy, I do not begrudge it to them. It is their right, and let them have it.

Among the acquaintances for whom I am indebted to the letters of Mr. Spenser, is Mr. Sotheby the poet. This gentleman, now no longer young, lives in a good style here, being apparently a man of fortune and condition. He is a good specimen of the country, simple, quiet, and, unless his countenance and manners are sad hypocrites, benevolent and honest. Indeed I have seldom seen any one who has left a more favourable impression, as respects the two latter qualities, on a short acquaintance.

Mr. Sotheby invited me to dinner, pretty much as a matter of course, for all social intercourse in England, as in America, and in France, is a good deal dependent on the table. I found him living in a house, that, so far as I could see, was American, as American houses used to be before the taste became corrupted by an uninstructed pretension. I was one of the first ; but Mr. Coleridge was already in the drawing-room. He was a picture of green old age ; ruddy, solid, and with a head as white as snow. His smile was benevolent, but I had scarcely time to reconnoitre him, before Sir Walter Scott appeared, accompanied by Mr. Lockhart. The latter is a genteel person, of a good carriage, with the air of a man of the world, and with

a sort of Scotch-Spanish face. His smile is significant, and not a bad one for a reviewer. The wife of the Bishop of London, and two or three more formed our party.

At table I sat directly opposite to Sir Walter Scott, with Mr. Coleridge on my left. Nothing passed during dinner, worth mentioning, except a remark or two from the latter. He said that he had been employed, when secretary to Sir Alexander Ball, the Governor of Malta, to conduct a correspondence between the commander of our squadron and the government of Tripoli. I presume this must have been while Commodore Morris was in command, that officer being on very familiar terms with Admiral Ball, as the following anecdote will show. The late Captain Bainbridge had a duel with an English officer at Malta, and under circumstances that enlisted the public feeling of his side, in which the latter was killed. The same day Commodore Morris breakfasted with the Governor. After breakfast, Sir Alexander Ball mentioned the affair to his guest, with proper expressions of regret, adding it would be his duty to demand Mr. Bainbridge. Of course, nothing was to be said to the contrary, and the Commodore took his leave. While pulling off to his ship he casually observed that Mr. Bainbridge would be demanded. The midshipman of the boat reported it to the lieutenant of the deck, who sent notice to Mr. Bainbridge, forthwith. In due time the official demand appeared.

The Commodore sent orders to the different ships to deliver the delinquent, and received answers that he was no longer in the squadron. He had, in truth, hurried off to Sicily in a hired felucca. This showed a good feeling on the part of Sir Alexander Ball, who always manifested a seaman's desire that we should flog the barbarians. Mr. Coleridge did not tell this anecdote, but I had it, many years since, from my old friend Commodore Morris, himself.

One of Mr. Coleridge's observations was in bad taste. He professed to like most of our officers, with a very supererogatory exception in the case of Commodore Rodgers. It was easy to see he had adopted an unworthy prejudice against this officer, on account of the affair of the Little Belt. No transaction of the same nature was probably ever more thoroughly investigated than this, or grosser injustice done any man than was done Commodore Rodgers. I confess I have always viewed his conduct as singularly creditable and humane. He was fired into, and he fired back, as a matter of course. Perceiving that his assailant made a feeble resistance, he ordered his own fire to cease, and it was not renewed until he was again assailed. He ceased a second time, from the same motive, and all in a very few minutes. His own ship was scarcely injured, and but a single boy hurt. His assailant was torn to pieces and had his decks covered with killed and wounded. Now, looking to our previous his-

tory, to the wanton attack on the Chesapeake, an attack for which the English government itself had felt bound to atone, it was a great proof of moderation, that Commodore Rodgers did not insist on the absolute submission of the Little Belt. He might have done it, and enforced his demand with no risk to his own vessel, for, as to the fanfaronade of the President's having been beaten off, and silenced, and on fire, besides being contradicted by the fullest testimony, on oath, no seaman who knows any thing of the respective forces of the two vessels can for a moment believe it probable.

That question has been pretty effectually settled by the Constitution, a sister ship of the President, which, in open war, has since whipped with ease, and carried into port, two such ships as the Little Belt, at the same time.

Nothing can better illustrate the monstrous consequences of the mental dependence to which the prevalence of English literature is helping to give an unnatural existence in America, than the manner in which Commodore Rodgers was visited by public opinion in his own country, for his conduct on this occasion. Sad, indeed, is the situation of the military man, who, holding his life in his hand at the service of his native land, meets with reproach, calumny, misrepresentation and malignant hostility from those for whom he has fought, and this because he has humbled their constant and most vindictive enemy! Commodore Rodgers has never



recovered the ground he lost, in the public favour at home, for his behaviour, on this occasion, marked as it was by a noble and generous forbearance. It is true men no longer reproach him with the particular act, for after the investigation and all that has since occurred, it would even exceed ordinary audacity to do so, but thousands entertain, unknown to themselves, prejudices which are derived from this source, and which will only cease with their breath.

This is it to serve a people, who will consent to form their estimates of their own servants, from the calculated hostility of their enemies! I believe we may boast of being the only nation in the universe, which submits to so unjust and so dangerous a domination. It unhappily forms our highest claim to originality !

Mr. Sotheby has a son a captain in the navy. This gentleman, I believe, felt the gratuitous character of Mr. Coleridge's remarks, for he expressed himself favourably as regards Commodore Rodgers, whom he had recently fallen in with, on service. I contented myself by saying, a little drily, that he was a highly respectable man, and a very excellent officer, which, at least, had the effect to change the conversation.

When the ladies had retired, the conversation turned on Homer, whom, it is understood Mr. Sotheby is now engaged in translating. Some one remarked that Mr. Coleridge did not believe in his

unity, or rather that there was any such man. This called him out, and certainly I never witnessed an exhibition as extraordinary as that which followed. It was not a discourse, but a dissertation. Scarcely any one spoke besides Mr. Coleridge, with the exception of a brief occasional remark from Mr. Sotheby, who held the contrary opinion, and I might say no one *could* speak. At moments he was surprisingly eloquent, though a little discursive, and the whole time he appeared to be perfectly the master of his subject and of his language. As near as I could judge, he was rather more than an hour in *possession of the floor*, almost without interruption. His utterance was slow, every sentence being distinctly given, and his pronunciation accurate. There seemed to be a constant struggling between an affluence of words and an affluence of ideas, without either hesitation or repetition. His voice was strong and clear, but not pitched above the usual key of conversation. The only peculiarity about it, was a slightly observable burring of the *r. r. rs.*, but scarcely more than what the language properly requires.

Once or twice, when Mr. Sotheby would attempt to say a word on his side of the question, he was permitted to utter just enough to give a leading idea, but no argument, when the reasoning was taken out of his mouth by the essayist, and continued, pro and con, with the same redundant and eloquent fluency. I was less struck by the logic

than by the beauty of the language, and the poetry of the images. Of the theme, in a learned sense, I knew too little to pretend to any verbal or critical knowledge, but he naturally endeavoured to fortify his argument by the application of his principles to familiar things ; and here, I think, he often failed. In fact, the exhibition was much more wonderful than convincing.

At first I was so much struck with the affluent diction of the poet, as scarcely to think of any thing else ; but when I did look about me, I found every eye fastened on him. Scott sat, immoveable as a statue, with his little grey eyes looking inward and outward, and evidently considering the whole as an exhibition, rather than as an argument ; though he occasionally muttered, "eloquent !" "wonderful !" "very extraordinary !" Mr. Lockhart caught my eye once, and he gave a very hearty laugh, without making the slightest noise, as if he enjoyed my astonishment. When we rose, however, he expressed his admiration of the speaker's eloquence.

The dissertations of Mr. Coleridge cannot properly be brought in comparison with the conversation of Sir James M'Intosh. One lectures, and the other converses. There is a vein of unpretending philosophy, and a habit of familiar analysis in the conversation of the latter, that causes you to remember the substance of what he has said, while the former, though synthetick and philosophical as

a verbal critic, rather enlists the imagination than any other property of the mind. M'Intosh is willing enough to listen, while Coleridge reminded me of a barrel to which every other man's tongue acted as a spigot; for no sooner did the latter move, than it set his own contents in a flow.

We were still at table, when the constant raps at the door gave notice that the drawing-room was filling above. Mr. Coleridge lectured on, through it all, for half an hour longer, when Mr. Sotheby rose. The house was full of company assembled to see Scott. He walked deliberately into a maze of petticoats, and, as he had told me at Paris, let them play with his mane as much as they pleased. I had an engagement, and went to look for my hat, which, to escape the fangs of the servants, who have an inconvenient practice, here, of taking your hat out of the drawing-room while you are at dinner, I had snugly hid under a sofa. The Bishop of London was seated directly above it, and completely covered it with his petticoat. Mr. Sotheby observing that I was aiming at something there, kindly inquired what I wanted. I told him I was praying for the translation of the Bishop of London, that I might get my hat, and, marvellous as it may seem, he has already been made Archbishop of Canterbury!

Just as I was going away, one or two ladies, whom I had the honour to know, made their appearance, and I remained a moment to speak to them. You

will remember that congress is just now debating the subject of the protective system. You cannot, however, know the interest that is felt on this subject here. I had a specimen of it to-night, in the conversation of these ladies, and in that of one or two more with whom the detention brought me in discourse. When the women occupy themselves with such subjects, it is fair to infer that the nation feels their magnitude. Europe generally, or the north of Europe rather, possesses a class of female politicians that is altogether unknown to us. We have party ladies, as well as England, who enter into the feelings of their male friends; who hate, abuse, and blindly admire, with the best of them; but how rare is it to find one who is capable of instructing a child in even the elementary principles of its country's interests, duties, and rights? A part of this indifference is owing to the natural condition of America, which places her above the necessity of the ordinary apprehensions and efforts; but it would be much better were our girls kept longer at their books, before they are turned into the world to run their light-hearted career of trifling.

With one lady I had a short but a sharp discussion on political economy, to-night. She was thoroughly free trade, and this is a doctrine that I hold to be bottomed on a complete fallacy. It would be quite as easy to prove, in my opinion, that liberty can exist without government, as to

show that nations can equally profit by trade, without consulting their peculiar circumstances. She asked me if trade did not consist in an exchange of equivalents. I thought not, in fact, but in an exchange of *apparent* equivalents. I did not believe, that the Indian who sold a beaver skin for half a dollar, in the forest, which, after deducting charges, brought four or five dollars of profit in the market, obtained any thing more than an *apparent* equivalent. He was a loser by his ignorance and his social facts, while the trader was, in the same proportion, a gainer. But free trade would permit the Indian to bring his own peltry down, and pocket the difference himself. True, as a *theory*; but life is composed of stubborn *facts*, that laugh at theories of this sort. He cannot come. Could restriction supply a remedy? Certainly; by appointing a clever agent, for instance, at a salary, to dispose of their peltry in common for them, and by excluding the traders from their territory, they might get double or treble the present prices. Their agent might cheat them. So does the trader. The buyers would go elsewhere. They cannot; the Indian has a monopoly of the article. Did I not believe free trade increased commerce, and indirectly diffused its advantages over the whole world? I made no doubt that many restrictions were absurd, and in this fact I saw all the true argument that can be adduced in favour of free trade. Let us imagine a garden

filled with fine fruit, on which the owner sets a moderate price. He refuses, however, to open his gates but once a week, and half his fruit is lost in consequence. This is an abuse of restriction. Convinced of his error, he throws his gates open altogether, and bids all enter and help themselves ; and to render things equal, he prohibits the use of ladders, or of climbing. A tall man enters and picks as much as he wants ; but the short man at his side can reach nothing. But free trade would let him take a ladder. True, if he could carry one ; but he can get none, or is too feeble. Now, knowledge, capital, practice, establishments, skill, and even natural aptitude, compose the difference in stature between nations, and the laws must provide the ladders, or the shorter will go altogether without fruit, or get it at the tall man's prices. But competition would regulate this, as other things, and the market would settle down into a fair system of equivalents. It is easy to make this out in theory, but difficult to prove it in practice. We usually expect too much from competition, whose natural tendency, in trade, is to combination. The thousand interests of life derange the action of the most ingenious theory. The world has never yet seen a fair exchange of equivalents in traffic, and I doubt if it ever will. It is said we can't buy more than we sell, and that the balance of trade regulates itself. This will do on paper, but it is not true in fact. We may sell

too low and buy too dear. When England takes a pound of our cotton at ten cents, and sells it back again at a dollar, leaving a clear profit of fifty cents, by which her manufacturers roll in their coaches, while the planter is living from hand to mouth, we are pretty clearly doing one or the other. But let natural efforts regulate this, and do not have recourse to laws. When a strong man gets a weak one down, if the liberation of the latter depends on his natural efforts, he will never rise.

Here I bade my fair antagonist good night, as I do you.



## LETTER XII.

TO WILLIAM JAY, ESQ., BEDFORD, NEW YORK.

ALTHOUGH I had been several times at St. Stephen's, I never, until quite lately, got into the House of Lords. A young connexion, who happens to be travelling in Europe, and myself, have, however, just made a visit to the Hospital of Incurables. Several members of this house have offered to procure permission for me, but it has always been in a way that has rendered the civility any thing but a favour. It is a marked fault in English manners, that they extend the factitious system, by which every concession of politeness of this nature has the appearance of being sought, to strangers.\*

The writer had a ludicrous specimen of this feeling, at a later day, in Italy. An English minister's wife gave a great ball, and applications were constantly made for tickets. As the town was small, this ball made a great sensation, and every one was talking of it. It was no great sacrifice for the family of the writer to preserve their self-respect on this occasion, as they lived retired from choice. Hints began to be thrown out, and questions asked if they had yet *procured*

I may say the same thing of the House of Commons, into which I have had a dozen offers of admission beneath the gallery, though but once in a way that I did not feel it to be a humiliation to accept. The exception was a case of thoroughly gentlemanlike attention, and I record it with the greater satisfaction.

As I am writing with the intention to supply comparisons of national manners, I will relate a recent occurrence that took place at Paris. A party of American travellers arrived at the door of the Chamber of Deputies, and, in the absence of all other means of getting in, they took the bold measure of sending their cards to the president, with a request to be admitted, and immediately had convenient places assigned them. I do not say I would imitate this course, but it is impossible not to admire the courtesy which overlooked the mistake.

There are men who ply about the doors of the two houses of parliament, to show strangers the way into them ; for it is almost as much an affair of

tickets. At eight o'clock of the very night of the entertainment, these important tickets arrived *unasked* ! Of course, no notice was taken of them. It will be remembered that all this dog-in-the-mangerism had nothing to do with the customs of the country in which the parties were, it being usual for the natives to give their guests more than two hours' notice, when they wished to see them at balls. This social *convivité* on one side, and coquetry on the other, distinguish the English circles all over Europe.

management and bribery to get into St. Stephen's chapel, after one is elected, as it is to get the legal return. We contracted with a man at the outer door to deliver us safe in the House of Lords, for three shillings sterling, each. The rogue carried us no farther than the first inner door, however, where he turned us over to one a step above him in dignity, coolly demanding a shilling for his pains. Our new-guide carried us through a door or two more, when we reached the real vendor of places. We paid the second guide another shilling, and the stipulated price went into the hands of the regular box-office-man.

I am far from complaining of the practice of paying for these admissions, though the price is too high. Members, you will remember, can grant admissions. It is quite impossible for every one to be present, and in a town like London, the half crown may be a very healthful check, both morally and physically. The legislative body that has not the power to clear its hall, would become contemptible. The publicity of congress is only commanded through its journals, the admission of strangers being purely a matter of favour. Here the latter are present, only, by a fiction, as indeed they are sometimes absent; for frequently when ordered to withdraw, they do not budge. The same principles substantially regulate the proceedings of congress and of parliament, though there exists one difference between them, that is founded on a fun-

damental distinction in the governments. In congress the vote is taken openly, in parliament it is not. It is a great pity that, while we admit of this affinity in forms, we do not always perceive the essential difference that exists in substance.

You know, already, that the hall of the House of Lords is divided into three divisions—that around the throne, that which contains the peers, and that which is set apart for the public. I should think the latter, which is termed below the bar, might hold two or three hundred people, standing. There are no seats, and even the reporters are compelled to write on their knees, or to sit on the floor. Luckily for them, there is little, in general, to report.\* There is also a small area around the fireplace which appears to be a no-man's-land, for I heard a commoner ask a peer, lately, whether it was permitted for the members of the other house to occupy it, and the answer was an admission of ignorance, though the peer rather thought it was. The members of the commons, however, usually stand around the throne. Mr. Wortley, a gentleman I had seen in America, was standing on the steps of the throne to-night, while his father, Lord Wharncliffe, made a speech.

We found a thin house, and plenty of space below the bar. The Duke of Wellington was on the ministerial bench, and not far from him was my

\* This arrangement was subsequently changed.

dinner acquaintance, the Bishop of ———, in his lawn sleeves. With the exception and that of another bishop, who entered in the course of the evening, besides the chancellor and the other officers of the house, I saw no one that was not in ordinary attire. All but the bishop and the latter wore their hats, and they wore their precious wigs. The chancellor looked like a miller with his head thrust through his wife's petticoat. As for my bishop, he appeared fidgetty and out of his place.

Lord Lansdowne and Lord Grey and Lord Holland, were all in their places, but neither said any thing but the first, who spoke for a few minutes. When we entered, I do not think there were twenty peers in their seats, though the number doubled at a later hour. These twenty were mostly clustered around the table, and their meeting strongly resembled that of an ordinary committee. The Marquis of Salisbury, a descendant of Burleigh, was on his feet when we came in, discussing some point connected with the game laws. I doubt if his great ancestor knew half as much of the same subject. The tone was conversational and quiet, and, altogether, I never was in a public body that had so little the air of one. I could not divest myself of the idea of a *conseil de famille*, that had met to consult each other, in a familiar way, about the disposition of some of their possessions, while the members of the house who were

listening, resembled the children who were excluded by their years.

Although one so seldom hears the term "my lord" in the world, it was pretty well bandied among the speakers to-night. They pronounced it "*my lurds*," the English uniformly sounding the possessive pronoun in question more like the Italians than we do, so that it makes "*mee lurds*." I was a good deal puzzled, when I first arrived here, to account for many abuses of the language, in the middling classes, and which sometimes are met with in the secondary articles of the public prints. "Think of *me* going without a hat," is a sentence of the sort I mean. It is intended to say, "Think of *my* going, &c.;" but, from a confusion between the sound and the spelling, the personal pronoun is used, by illiterate people, instead of the possessive. This species of illiteracy, by the way, extends a good way up English society.

I take it, the polite way of pronouncing this word is by a sort of elision—as *m'horse*, *m'dog*, *m'gun*, and that *my* horse, *my* dog, *my* gun, the usual American mode, and *me* horse, *me* dog, *me* gun, the English counterpart, are equally wrong: the first by an offensive egotism, and the last from offensive ignorance. I think more noble peers, however, said "*me lurds*," than "*m'lurds*," though the formal tone of public speaking is seldom favourable to simple or accurate pronunciation. It usually plays the deuce with prosody, unless one

has a naturally easy elocution. The French, in this respect, have the advantage of us, their language having no emphatic syllables. A Frenchman will often talk an hour without a true argument or a false quantity.

Lord Salisbury appeared to have a knowledge of his subject, which, in itself, was scarcely worthy to occupy the time of the peers of Great Britain. I do not mean that game is altogether beneath one's notice, and still less that the moral enormities to which the English game-laws have given birth, do not require a remedy ; but that local authority ought to exist to regulate all such minor interests ; first, on account of their relative insignificance, and, secondly, because the reasoning that may apply to one county, may not fitly apply to another.

You may perhaps be ignorant that, by the actual law, game cannot be sold at all in England. My wife was ill lately, and I desired our landlady to send and get her a bird or two, but the good woman held up her hands and declared it was impossible, as there was a fine of fifty pounds for buying or selling game. The law is evaded, however, hares, it is said, passing from hand to hand constantly in London, under the name of *lions*!

I remember once, in travelling on our frontiers, to have received an apology from an inn-keeper, for not having any thing fit to eat, because he had only venison, wild pigeons, and brook trout. I asked him what he wanted better. He did not know.

“but the gentleman had quite likely been used to pork!” Absurd as all this seems, I remember, after serving a season on the great lakes, to have *asked* for boiled pork and turnips, as a treat. Our physical enjoyments are mere matters of habit, while the intellectual, alone, are based on a rock. The worst tendency we have at home, is manifested by a rapacity for money, which, when obtained, is to be spent in little besides eating and drinking.

A Lord Carnarvon said a few words, and Lord Wharncliffe made a speech, but it was all in the same conversational tone. The peers do not address the chancellor in speaking, but their own body : hence the constant recurrence of the words “my lurds.” The chancellor does not occupy a seat at one end of the area, like a speaker, but he is placed on his woolsack, considerably advanced towards the table.

I should have been at a loss to know the members, but for a plain tradesman-like looking man at my elbow, who appeared to be familiar with the house, and who was there to show the lions to a country friend. I was much amused by this person’s observations, which were a strange medley of habitual English deference for rank and natural criticism. “There,” said he, “that is Lord L——, and he looks just like a journeyman carpenter.” His friend, however, was too much awe-struck to relish this familiarity.

I was a little disappointed with the *physique* of



the peers, who are, by no means, a particularly favourable specimen of the English gentlemen, in this respect. Perhaps I have never seen enough of them together to form a correct opinion. A Lord A——, whom I met at Paris, told me that his father had taken the trouble to count the pig-tails in the House of Lords, at the trial of the late queen, and that he found they considerably exceeded a hundred. I was aware this body was somewhat behind the age in certain essentials, but I did not know, until then, that this peculiarity extended to that precise portion of the head.

The peers of Great Britain, considered as a political body, are usurpers in the worst sense of the word. The authority they wield, and the power by which it is maintained, are the results neither of frank conquest, nor of legally delegated trusts, but of insidious innovations effected under the fraudulent pretences of succouring liberty. They were the principal, and, at that time, the natural agents of the nation, in rescuing it from the tyranny of the Stuarts, and profiting by their position, they have gradually perverted the institutions to their own aggrandisement and benefit. This is substantially the history of all aristocracies, which commence by curbing the power of despots, and end by substituting their own.

There exists a radical fault in the theory of the British government, which supposes three estates, possessed of equal legislative authority. Such a

condition of the body politic is a moral impossibility. Two would infallibly combine to depose the other, and then they would quarrel which was to reap the fruits of victory. The very manner in which the popular rights were originally obtained in England, go to prove that nothing of the sort entered into the composition of the government at the commencement. Boroughs were created by royal charters. Even the peers were emanations of the royal will, and, much as might be expected, the creatures of the king's pleasure.

In the progress of events, the servants became too strong for their masters. They set aside one dynasty and established another, under the form of law. Since that time they have been gradually accumulating force, until all the branches of government are absorbed in one; not absolutely in its ordinary action, it is true, but in its fundamental power. Parliament has got to be absolute, and the strictly legislative part of it, by establishing the doctrine of ministerial responsibility, has obtained so much control over the part which is termed the executive, as to hold it completely within its control.

An Englishman is very apt to affirm that the President of the United States has more power than the King of England. This he thinks is establishing the superior liberty of his own country. He is right enough in his fact, but strangely wrong in the inference. The government of the United

States has no pretension to a trinity in its elements, though it maintains one in its action ; and that of Great Britain pretends to one in its elements, while it has a unity in its action. The president has more real power than the king, because he actually wields the authority attributed to him in the Constitution, and the king has less real authority than the president, because he does not exercise the authority attributed to him by the Constitution, even as the Constitution is now explained, different as that explanation is from what it was a century since.

Were the King of England to name a ministry that did not please his parliament, which in substance is pleasing those who hold the power to make members, that ministry could not stand a week after parliament assembled. If the two houses of parliament were composed of men of different interests, or of different social elements, there would still be something like an apparent balance in the composition of the state ; but they are not. The peers hold so much political control in the country, as, virtually, to identify the two bodies, so far as interests are concerned. Without this, there would be no harmony in the government, for where there are separate bodies of equal nominal authority in a state, one must openly control the others, or all must secretly act under the same indirect influence; not the influence of a common concern in the public good, for rulers never attend to that, until they

have first consulted their own interests, as far as their powers will conveniently allow. In point of fact then, the peers of England and the commons of England are merely modifications of the same social *castes*.

In looking over the list of the members of the House of Commons, I find one hundred and sixty with those titles which show that they are actually the sons of peers, and when we remember the extent and influence of intermarriages, it would not probably exceed the truth were I to say that more than half the lower house stand, as regards the upper, either in the relation of son, son-in-law, brother, or brother-in-law, nephew, or uncle.\* But nobility is by no means the test of this government. It is, strictly, a landed, and not a titled aristocracy. There are seventy-four baronets among the commons, and these are usually men of large landed estates. If we take the whole list, we shall not probably find a hundred names that, socially, belong to any other class than that of the aristocracy, strictly so called, or that are not so nearly allied to them in interests, as virtually to make the

\* Even in the parliament of 1832, I find no less than seventy-four of the *eldest* sons and *heirs* of peers, sitting as commoners. Among them are Lords Surrey, Tavistock, Worcester, Douro, Graham, Mandeville, and Chandos. All of whom are the eldest sons of Dukes. In the parliament of 1830, were also Lords Seymour, Euston, and Blandford, of the same rank.

House of Commons, identical, as a social caste, with the House of Lords. It is of little moment whether these bodies are hereditary or elective, so long as both represent the same set of interests.

The aristocracy of England is checked less by any of the contrivances of the state, than by the extra-constitutional power of public opinion. This is a fourth estate in England, and a powerful estate every where, that, in an age like this perhaps does more than written compacts to restrain abuses. It has even curbed despotism over more than half of Europe. As the influence of public opinion will always bear the impress of the moral civilization of a people, England is better off, in this particular, than most of her neighbours, and it is probably one great reason, why her aristocracy has not fleeced the nation more than it has, though I don't know that it has any thing to reproach itself with, in the way of neglect, on this score.

The perpetuity of the ascendancy of the English aristocracy is a question much mooted just now, and I have frequently heard in private, sturdy and frank opinions on the subject. There are three prominent facts that, I think, must soon produce essential changes in this feature of the English system. In carrying out the scheme of spreading the power of the peers over the commons, as it has been done by personal wealth, individuals of the body have become offensively powerful to the majority of their own order. Influence is get-

ting into too few hands to be agreeable to those, who, having so much, would wish to share in all. This is one evil; and I think when reform does occur, as occur it must, that there will be a great effort to arrest it, when this one point shall have been rectified.

But there is a far more powerful foe to the existing order of things. The present system is based on property, for, with a king without authority, the power of the Lords, unsupported by that of the Commons, would not be worth a straw in this age; and, though land may not be, the balance of power, as it is connected with money, is rapidly changing hands in England. There has arisen, within the last fifty years, a tremendous money-power, that was formerly unknown to the country. Individuals got rich in the last century, where classes get rich now; and instead of absorbing the new men, as was once done, the aristocracy is in danger of being absorbed by them.

It would not be in nature for a large class of men to become rich without wishing to participate in power. It is a necessity in money to league itself with authority. Were it not for the natural antipathy between trade and democracy, the mercantile and manufacturing classes of England would make common cause with the people and change the government at once; but the affluent dread revolutions; the debt of England is a mortgage on the rich; and, most of all, commerce detests popular

rights. It is, in itself, an aristocracy of wealth. When the hour comes, however, it will be found struggling to equalize the advantages of money, I think.

The third danger arises from the fictions of the system. No power on earth can resist the assaults of reason, if constantly exposed to them, since it is the language of natural truth. Liberty of the press is incompatible with exclusion in politics, or at least, with an exclusion that proscribes a majority. Neither throne, nor senate, can withstand the constant attacks of arguments that address themselves equally to the sense of right and to the passions of men. The alternatives are to submit, or to repress.

Now, while the aristocracy has been silently and steadily extending its net over England, it has always been with the professions of a monarchy. It was an offence to speak evil of the king, when it was no offence to speak evil of the aristocrats. The law protected a fiction, while it overlooked a reality. It is too late to change. Feeling an indifference to a power that was little more than nominal, the press has been permitted to deal freely even with the throne, of late, and England would not bear a law which denied her the privilege of censuring the aristocrats. The public mind, on this point, appears to be under the influence of a re-action. The French Revolution so far quickened the jealousies of the English government, that prose-

cutions for sedition were carried to extremes under Mr. Pitt, and now that the danger is abated, something like a licence on the other side has followed.

The church will do more to uphold the present system than the aristocracy, although there are two sides even to the effect of the influence of the church. It sustains and it enfeebles the government, through dissent. It sustains, by enlisting the prejudices of churchmen of its side, and it enfeebles by throwing large masses necessarily into the opposition.\* On the whole, however, it aids

\* Just before the writer left England, the Lords threw out the bill for the repeal of the Test Laws. Shortly after, the matter was brought up anew, and the authorities of orthodox Oxford were assembled to petition *against* the measure.\* On the day of meeting, however, to the astonishment of every body, speeches were made in *favour* of the repeal by several prominent men. Of course the petition was for repeal, for party is just as well drilled in Europe as it is with us.

A few months later, I had the whole secret explained. A leading dissenter, now a member of parliament, told me that he and his friends gave the government to understand distinctly, that if the Test Laws were not repealed, the dissenters of England would make common cause with the Catholics of Ireland, and overturn the establishment.

The following anecdote is also derived from the best authority. About the time nullification was rife in America, a gentleman, also in parliament, went from London to a dinner in the country. He found the Right Rev. Lord Bishop of ———, among the company. "What news do you bring us from town, Mr. ———?" asked the consecrated christian.



greatly in upholding the present order of things. One of the most distinguished statesmen of this country, observed to me pithily, the other day, that we enjoyed a great advantage in having no established church. I understood him to mean that he found the establishment of England a mill-stone around the neck of reform.

One who should judge of the character of the English aristocracy, by inferences drawn solely from the political system, and from the warnings of history, would not come to a fairer decision, than he who should judge of the condition of democracy in America, by the state of the Grecian and Italian republics. There is much, very much, that is redeeming here, though it belongs rather to incidents of the national facts, than to the effects of purely political causes. As one of the chief of the latter, however, may be mentioned the openness to censure and comment, that has arisen from the fraud of considering the government in theory, and in the penal laws, as a monarchy, when it has so few genuine claims to the character. While this circumstance exposes the real rulers to constant assaults, and, as I think, to ultimate defeat, it has, for them, the redeeming advantage (in some measure

“No news, my Lord.” “No news! We were told there was *good* news.” “To what do you allude, my Lord?” “Why, we were told there is every reason to expect a speedy dissolution of the American Union.”

redeeming, at least) of putting them on their guard, of admonishing them of their danger, and of checking and correcting the natural tendency to abuses. It is, in fact, a means of bringing the moral civilization and knowledge of the age to bear directly on their public and private deportment. Viewed in the first sense, it is usual, here, to say that the families of the peers are as exemplary as those of any other class of subjects. It is absurd to make any essential distinction between the nobility and the gentry, on such a point, for they are identified in all but the mere circumstance that the former are a titled division of the aristocracy. As between *castes*, I do not believe there is any essential moral differences, anywhere. Each has the vices and the virtues of its condition, and if leisure and wealth tempt to indulgences, they also supply the means of those higher mental pleasures which do quite as much as preaching, towards restraining evil. Individuals of rank do certainly abuse their privileges, and others profit by their insignificance. There are cases of profligate vice among the English nobility, beyond a question, but, as a whole, I believe they are externally as decent and moral, as the same number of any class in the kingdom. We misconceive the character of aristocracy quite as much as they misconceive the character of democracy. Both are essentially tempered by the spirit of the age. The practice of marrying for worldly views, causes rather

more breaches of the marriage vows among the women, than would otherwise be the case, though they are certainly better than many other European nations in this respect. The English say that the world sees the worst of them, in this particular, a sentiment unknown to the women of the Continent, causing their own to elope, when they have yielded to an illicit attachment. I do not believe in either the fact, or the reason. The disclosures prove that they are discovered half the time, and the elopements that are voluntary, probably proceed from the fact that the law allows divorces, and re-marriages, an advantage, if indeed it be one, that is denied catholics. This is the weak side of the morals of the English nobility, among whom there are probably a larger proportion of divorces, than among the same number of any other protestants. The separations, *a mensa et thoro*, are also comparatively numerous.

I have, first and last, been brought more or less in personal contact, with a large number of the nobility of this realm. I have generally found them well mannered and well educated, and sedulous to please. There is a certain species of conventional knowledge, that belongs in a measure to their peculiar social position, that is diffused among them with surprising equality. I can liken it most to the sort of inherent tastes and tact, that distinguish the children of gentlemen from those who are equally well taught in other respects, but have

not had the same early advantages of association, and which frequently render them companionable and agreeable when there is little beneath the surface. Judged by a severer standard, they are like other educated men, of course, though their constant intercourse with the highest classes of a nation distinguished for learning, taste, and research, probably imparts to them as a body, an air of knowledge that is, in some degree, above the level of their true intelligence. Of a good many of those with whom I have even conversed, I know too little to speak with sufficient understanding, but among all those with whom I have, I should find it difficult to name one who has left on my mind the impression of vapid ignorance that so often besets us in our own circles. Something is probably owing to their better tone of manners, which, if it does nothing else, by inculcating modesty of deportment, prevents exposure. On the other hand, I could not mention half a dozen who left behind them the impression of men possessing talents above the ordinary level. Perhaps, however, this is in a just proportion, to their numbers. Lord Grey, I have little doubt, has one of the most masculine and vigorous minds among the peers; and I think it will be found, should he ever reach the upper house, that Lord Stanley will possess one of the acutest.

The English appear to me to encourage a fault in their eloquence, that is common to their literature

and their manners. The incessant study of the Roman classics has imparted a taste for a severity of style and manner that is better suited to the comprehensive tongue of the ancients, than to our own ampler vocabulary. From this, or from some other cause, they push simplicity to affectation; or, admitting that there is an unconsciousness of the peculiarity, to coldness. This is observable in their ordinary manners, and in their style of parliamentary elocution; the latter, in particular, usually wanting the feeling necessary to awaken sympathy. As respects the Lord's, it is rare, I fancy, to hear any thing approaching oratory, the delivery and the language being conversational rather than oratorical. They appear to be afraid of falling into the forensic, as it might detract from a speaker's glory to have it proved upon him he was a lawyer!

The English nobleman, however, is usually above the miserable affectations of the drilled coldness of the automaton school. He appears to have imbibed a portion of the amenity of the high society of the continent. In this respect the men are better than the women, as our women are said to be better than the men. I think one would apply the term *gracieuse* to fewer English women than common, though the men of rank merit that of *aimable* oftener than it is adjudged to them. I have often, quite often, met with English women of winning exterior; but their deportment has almost

always appeared to be the result of their feelings; inducing one to esteem, as much as to admire them; and, although one of ordinary capacity most respects this trait, where it is wanting he could wish to find its substitute. In reference to the points of a factitious coldness of manner, and a want of feeling in oratory, I should say the peers, as compared to the class next beneath them, are most obnoxious to the latter charge, and the least to the former.

A day or two after my first visit, I went again to the House of Lords to hear Mr. Brougham speak in the case of an appeal. I found but two peers present, the chancellor, and, I believe, Lord Carnarvon. The former sat on the wool-sack buried in flax, as usual, and the latter occupied one of the lateral benches, with his hat on. The appeal was made from a decision of the chancellor, who had ordered that a father should not have the custody of his sons. It was an extraordinary proceeding in appearance, at least, though reflection somewhat lessens its absurdity. In point of fact, owing to a change in the administration, the chancellor from whom the appeal was made, was not the person who now presided, but had not this accidental change intervened, it would have been otherwise. Mr. Brougham spoke several hours, and it would have been irksome to him, indeed, to be compelled to argue, on appeal, a case over again, that had already been presented to the

same cars! When one comes to consider the matter, however, he finds that there are many lawyers among the lords, who, if they do not hear the arguments, may read them; and who can rely on their own knowledge in making up their minds, when they come to the vote. The defect was, therefore, one of form rather than one of substance, though it was strangely deficient in appearances, a fault the least likely to occur in this government.

## LETTER XIV.

TO WILLIAM JAY, ESQ., BEDFORD, N. Y.

WERE the people of England, free from the prejudices of their actual situation and absolutely without a political organization, assembled to select a polity for their future government, it is probable that the man who should propose the present system, would at once be set down as a visionary, or a fool. Could things be reversed, however, and the nation collected for the same purpose, under the influence of the opinions that now prevail, the proposer of the system that would be very likely to be adopted in the former case, would be lucky if he escaped with his ears. It is safer that facts should precede opinions in the progress of political meliorations, than that opinions should precede facts; though it would be better still, could the two march *pari passu*. All essential changes in the control of human things, must be attended by one of two species of contests, the struggles of those who would hasten, or the struggles of those who would retard



events. The active portion of the former are usually so small a minority, that it is pretty accurate to affirm they are more useful as pioneers than as pilots, while it is in the nature of things that the latter should gradually lose their power by desertions, until compelled by circumstances to yield.

The considerations connected with these truths teach us that reform is generally a wiser remedy than revolution. Still it must be recollected that the progress of things is not always in the right direction. Artificial and selfish combinations frequently supplant the natural tendency to improvement, and a people, by waiting the course of events, might sometimes be the supine observers of the process of forging their own chains. In all such cases, unless the current can be turned, it must be made to lose its influence by being thrown backward.

In continuing the subject of the last letter, I am of opinion that the present system of England is to undergo radical alterations, by the safest of the two remedies, that of reform; a denial of which will certainly produce convulsions. The hereditary principle, as extended beyond the isolated abstraction of a monarch, is offensive to human pride, not to say natural justice, and I believe the world contains no instance of an enlightened people's long submitting to it, unless it has been relieved by some extraordinary, mitigating, cir-

cumstances of national prosperity. The latter has been the fact with England; but, as is usually the case with all exceptions to general rules, it has brought with it a countervailing principle that, sooner or later, will react on the system.

Hitherto, England has had a monopoly of available knowledge. Protected by her insular situation, industry has taken refuge in the island; and, fostered by franchises, it has prospered beyond all former example. The peculiar construction of the empire, in which national character and conquest have been mutually cause and effect, has turned a flood of wealth into that small portion of it, which, being the seat of power, regulates the tone of the whole, as the heart controls the pulsations of the body. This is the favourable side of the question, and on it are to be found the temporal advantages that have induced men to submit to an ascendancy that they might otherwise resist.

The unfavourable is peculiarly connected with the events of the last thirty years. In order to counteract the effects of the French revolution, the aristocracy carried on a war, that has cost the country a sum of money which, still hanging over the nation in the shape of debt, is likely to produce a radical change in the elements of its prosperity. In the competition of industry which is now spreading itself throughout Christendom, it is absolutely necessary to keep down the price of labour in England, to prevent being undersold in

foreign markets, and to keep up the prices of food, in order to pay taxes. These two causes united have created an excess of pauperism, that hangs like a dead weight on the nation, and which helps to aid the rivalry of foreign competition. Taking the two together, about one hundred and thirty millions of dollars annually are paid by the nation, and much the greater part as a fine proceeding from the peculiar form of the government ; for the sacrifices that were made, were only to be expected from those who were contending especially for their own privileges. As the territories of England were impregnable, no mere monarch could have carried on the system of Mr. Pitt, since the rich would not have submitted to it, and as for the people, or the mass, there would have been no sufficient motive. In order to appreciate these efforts, and their consequences, it will be necessary to consider the vast annual sums expended by Great Britain during the late wars, and then look around for the benefits. One undeniable result is, I take it, that industry is quitting the kingdom, under the influence of precisely the same causes as those by which it was introduced. I do not mean so much that capitalists depart, as they left Flanders, for the scale on which things are now graduated, renders more regular changes necessary, but that the skill emigrates, to avoid the exactions of the state. I may, however, go further, and add that capital also quits the country. It takes longer to subvert the sources of na-

tional than of individual prosperity, and we are not to look for results in a day. Still these results, I think, are already apparent. They appear in the moderated tone of this government, in its strong disinclination to war, and, in fact, on an entire change in its foreign policy.

It is quite obvious that the English aristocracy is existing in a state of constant alarm. The desperate expedient of Mr. Pitt, that of undertaking a crusade against popular rights, is already producing its reaction. It is seldom that the human mind can be brought to an unnatural tension on one side, without recoiling to the other extreme, as soon as liberated. Men are constantly vibrating around truth, the passions and temporary interests acting as the weights to keep the pendulum in motion. The result of the present condition of the English aristocracy, is to put them, in a political as well as a social sense, on their good behaviour. Although so great a proportion of the peculiar embarrassments of Great Britain may be traced, with sufficient clearness, to the exclusive features of the government, there probably never has been a period in the history of the nation, when the power of the few has been so undisputed in practice, or its exercise more under the sense of correction.

I have already said that one of the consequences of the forced prosperity that grew out of the system of Mr. Pitt, was to raise up a dangerous social

caste, that had no immediate connexion with the government, while it became too powerful to be overlooked. Sir James M'Intosh, in his History of the Revolution of 1668, has said, that the Constitution attributes the power of creating peers to the king, "either to reward public service, or to give dignity to important offices, or to add ability or knowledge to a part of the legislature, or to repair the injuries of time, by the addition of new wealth to an aristocracy which may have decayed." Nothing is wanting to the truth of this exposition but to add the words "or any thing else." Mr. Pitt extended these constitutional motives by including that of neutralising an antagonist wealth, which might become dangerous to the particular wealth already in possession of power. The peerage has been essentially doubled since the accession of George III. In addition to these accessions to the House of Lords, a great number of Irish peers have been created, who are also a species of direct political aristocrats. Social bribes have been liberally dealt out, in addition, by an enormous creation of baronets, of whom there are now near a thousand in the empire.

But this is a mode of maintaining a system, that will soon exhaust itself. Knighthood, except in particular cases, is no longer a distinction for a gentleman, and would be refused by any man of a decided social position, unless under circumstances to which I have elsewhere alluded. The exceptions are in

the cases of especial professional merit. A lawyer, an artist, a physician, or a soldier, might be knighted without discredit, but scarcely an ordinary civilian. It would throw a sort of ridicule about a man or a woman of fashion, to be termed "Sir John," or "My Lady," without these alleviating circumstances.

The case is a little, but not much, better, as respects baronets. I should think it would no longer be easy to get a man of family, who is familiar with the world, to accept of a baronetcy, except as a professional reward. As we say in America, "the business is overdone." Even Irish peerages are not in favour.

You will readily understand the approaching necessity for change in the institutions of England, by looking a little more closely at facts. The danger comes equally from the rich and the poor. From the rich, because they are excluded from power by the action of the borough system, and from the poor, because they are reduced to the minimum of physical enjoyments, and are formidable by numbers, as well as by their intelligence.

As regards the rich, though the scale of pretension has gradually been extending itself with the wealth of the nation, the latter has outgrown the possibility of meeting its wants. The price of a seat in parliament amounts almost to a tariff, it is true, the average expense for a term of years being set down as a thousand pounds a-year, but the sup-

ply is limited, and is in a few hands. Men may submit to a competition, but, though in the case of representation there must be some fixed numbers, they naturally dislike monopoly, and still more, in such cases, the fruits of monopoly. Were the English government strictly a money-power government, its security would be treble what it is to-day, for it would at once neutralize one of the most formidable of its enemies. But it is not; for though based on money, it is so modified as not to give even money fair play. Were there not natural political antipathies between the rich and the poor, they would unite, and speedily produce a change. It would be a master-stroke of policy to bring in all the wealth of the country again, as a loyal ally of the government, by destroying the borough system entirely, equalising representation by numbers, establishing a reasonably high rate of qualification, and, by preserving the open vote, leave money to its influence. I take it, a money-government, that is fairly in action, in an industrious and intelligent nation, is only equalled in strength by one based on popular rights, in a community accustomed to the exercise of political privileges. It is, however, the government most likely to corrupt and debase society.

When I tell you of the intelligence of the poor in England, you are to understand me, not as saying that it extends very far; but the cultivation of intellect dependent on the exercise of the me-

mechanical arts, the cheapness of printing, and the general spirit of the age, have raised up a set of men in England, among what are called the operatives, who are keen in investigation, frequently eloquent and powerful in argument, and alive, by position, to those natural rights of which they are now deprived. These men act strongly on the minds of their fellows, and are producing an effect it would be folly to despise. Paine was of the class.

The popular accounts of the fortunes of the landed aristocracy of England, may lead you into erroneous notions concerning their relative wealth and power, so far as the two are connected. Conversing lately with one of the best informed men in the kingdom on such a subject, I alluded to the reputed income of Lord Grosvenor, who is said to have £300,000 a-year. My acquaintance laughed at the exaggeration, telling me that he did not believe there was a man in the country who had half that income, and that he knew but five or six who, he thought, could have as much as £100,000.

These large incomes are also liable to many reductions, even when they do exist. The estate is there, certainly, and the incumbent has a life interest in it; but what between widows' dowers, younger children, mortgages, and liens created by the anticipations incident to entails, and other charges, one, who is a good judge, tells me he questions if



the proprietors of England touch much more than half the amount of their rent-rolls, if indeed they receive as much. My friend is intimate with a man of rank here, with whom I have, also, a slight acquaintance, and, speaking of his estate, he added, "Now, vulgar rumour will tell you Lord —— has a hundred thousand a-year; he has, in truth, a rent-roll of sixty thousand, of which he actually receives about forty."

There is so much beauty in probity, and one feels such a respect for those who manifest more devotedness to the affections than to worldly interests, that I cannot refrain from relating a circumstance, or two, connected with the history of this nobleman, that were related by his friend in the same conversation.

Lord —— was born a younger son. The improvidence of his father left a debt of the enormous amount of near a million of dollars. The elder brother and heir refused to recognize this claim, which did not form a lien on the estate. A moderate provision had been made for the younger brother. At this period, my friend was commissioned to speak to the latter, concerning a marriage with the heiress of a large estate; not less, I believe, than sixteen thousand a-year. He heard the proposition, coloured, hesitated, and answered that if he ever married, his choice was made. Shortly after he married his present wife, who was virtually without fortune. A few years later the elder bro-

ther died childless, when he succeeded to the titles and the estates. From that moment his expenditure was so regulated, that in a few years he was enabled to pay every sixpence of the debts of the father, since which time he has lived with the liberal hospitality becoming his station.

I do not know that the English nobility are at all deficient in liberality, but the charity-*funfaronades* of Christmas blankets and hogsheds of beer, and warm cloaks, that so often appear in the journals here, have only excited a smile, while I have never seen Lord ———, since I learned these traits, without feeling a reverence for the man. He has his reward, for his wife is just such a woman as would remove all cause of regret for having acted nobly.

An English gentleman has just published a book on the subject of the exaggerations that prevail concerning the incomes of the gentry of the country. He has adopted a very simple and a very accurate mode to prove his case, which, it strikes me, he has done completely. "Vulgar" rumour gives Lord A—— thirty thousand a-year, he says, at starting. "Now we all know that the estates of Lord A—— consist of such and such manors, in such a county, and of so many more manors, all of which he names, in some other county." These manors he shows to contain so many acres of land. The rental in each county is pretty well known, and, taking it at two pounds the acre, he calculates that nine thou-

sand acres give but eighteen thousand a-year, *gross* income. This diminishes the popular rental nearly one-half. In this manner he goes on to show, in a great many real cases, (mine being suppositious), how enormously fame has exaggerated the truth in these matters. In estimating the struggle between the wealth that is in possession of power, and that which is excluded by the present political system of England, you are, therefore, to discard from your mind fully one-half of what is popularly said about the former, as sheer exaggeration.

Still the aristocracy of this country is very powerful. It has enlisted in its favour a strong national feeling, a portion of which is well founded, a part of which is fraudulent, and even wicked, and some of which is dependent on one of the most abject conditions of the mind to which man is liable. By aristocracy I do not now mean merely the peers and their heirs, but that class which is identified by blood, intermarriages, possessions, and authority in the government, for you are never to forget, though the House of Commons does contain a few members who are exceptions, that the controlling majority of that body is, to all intents and purposes, no more than another section of the interests represented by the peers. The two bodies may occasionally disagree, but it is as partners discuss their common concerns, and as the lords frequently disagree among themselves.

The English gentlemen have the merits of

courage, manliness, intelligence, and manners.— Their morals are overrated, except as to the vices which are connected with meanness. Perhaps there is less of the latter than is commonly found in countries where the upper classes are more directly under the influence of courts, but even of this there is much, very much, more than it is common to believe in America. As between the English and ourselves, I honestly think we have the advantage of them on this point. They are our superiors in manners and in intelligence; they are our superiors in all that manliness which is dependent on opinion, but certainly I have known things practised, and that pretty openly, in connexion with interest, by men of condition here, which could not well be done by a gentleman with us, without losing *caste*. In the northern states we have very few families whose sons would now hesitate about embarking in commerce, at need, and this, of itself, is a great outlet (as well as inlet) for the vices of a pecuniary nature. The prejudices connected with this one subject are the cause of half the meannesses of Europe. The man who would hesitate about suffering his name to appear in a commercial firm would pass his life in a commission of meannesses, not to say crimes, that should put him to the ban of society. This feeling is daily becoming weaker in England, but it is still strong. Men of family scarcely ever engage *openly* in commerce, though they often do things *covertly*, which, besides possessing the

taint of trade, have not the redeeming merit of even its equivocal ethics. To them the army, navy, church and government patronage are almost the only resources. The latter facts have given rise to two of the most odious of the practical abuses of the present system. A few occasionally appear at the bar, but more as criminals than as advocates. The profession is admitted within the pale of society, as it opens the way to the peerage and to parliament, but it requires too much labour and talents to be in favour. A physician in England ranks higher, professionally, than almost any where else, but he is scarcely considered an equal in the higher set. The younger sons of peers enter all the professions but that of medicine, but I never heard of one who chose to be a doctor. A curate may become Archbishop of Canterbury, but a physician can merely hope to reach a baronetcy, a dignity little coveted. Like our "Honourables," and "Colonels," it is not in vogue with the higher classes. I cannot better illustrate the state of feeling here, in relation to these minor titles, than by our own in relation to the appellations named, which are of much account in certain sets, but which it is thought bad taste to bandy among gentlemen.

The masculine properties of the English aristocracy (I include the gentry, you will remember) have deservedly given them favour with the nation. They owe something of this to the climate,

which is favourable to field sports, and something, I think, to the nature of their empire which has fostered enterprise. Physically they are neither larger, nor stronger, nor more active than ourselves, but I think they attend more to manly exercises. The army has been exclusively their property, for it is necessary, in such a government, to keep it in the hands of those who rule. The purchase of commissions is strictly in unison with the spirit of the system. Then the insulated situation of the kingdom, coupled with its wealth, induce travelling. The influence of the latter can scarcely be overrated, and no nation has so many motives for quitting home. The English go abroad for the sake of economy, for while their actual expenses are less, their incomes are increased from five to twenty per cent., by the usual courses of exchange. Formerly none but men of rank went abroad, and they were distinguished from the rest of the nation by their taste and liberality, but now all the genteel classes (and some below them even) travel. It is true the English character on the Continent has suffered by the change, but the English nation is greatly the gainer.

The English gentlemen are not sparing of their persons in war, or in civil troubles. They would not have abandoned Paris to a mob, in 1792.\*

\* In 1830-31, when England was menaced with revolution, the English travellers on the Continent of Europe, hurried back to their own country, to be at their posts.

These are qualities to captivate the mass, who greatly prize daring and physical excellencies. Although there is a considerable and certainly an increasing hostility to the exclusive classes of England, there is also a deep feeling of respect and even of attachment for them, in a portion of the nation. Perhaps no aristocracy was ever less enervated or thrown off its guard, by the enjoyment of its advantages, than this, a fact that must be attributed, too, to the circumstance that the public, by possessing so many more franchises than usual, have kept them constantly on the alert. In the event of any struggle between the aristocrats and the mass, I should say that much may be expected from the manliness and spirit of the former, enough, perhaps, aided as these qualities would be by their habits of control and combination, to secure the victory, were it not that the very affluence of intelligence in this portion of the nation, would always put at the command of the people sufficient men of minds and authority to direct them. Although a wide reform, wide enough to admit themselves, would be apt to be sustained by the *novi homines*, revolution would not; for the new rich, as a body, are always found on the side opposed to popular rights; and the aristocracy would have most to apprehend from seceders from their own body, as leaders, unless events, as probably would be the case, should raise up some man of native fitness for the station, from the ranks of the people themselves.

That part of the present influence of the aristocracy which is fraudulent and even wicked, is connected with a wide-spread system of studied misrepresentation, and with abuses connected with the church. As I shall probably have occasion to write a short letter on the subject of the latter, I will touch on the former alone, at present. While the aristocracy itself is so well mannered and less apt to betray illiberal sentiments than the classes beneath it, I cannot think it free from the imputation of having conspired to circulate the atrocious misrepresentations which have been so industriously promulgated against ourselves, for instance, during the last half century. They may despise the traitors, but they love the treason. The whole code of prejudices and false political maxims which pervade society here, is the offspring of a system of which they are the head. They have differed from the other nations of Europe, in which power is exclusive, in the circumstance of the franchises of the nation. A franchise is not power of itself, but it is an exemption from the abuses of power. As it was not possible to muzzle the press, it has become necessary to make it the instrument of circulating falsehood. No means of effecting such an end are so certain as that of creating prejudice, which instantly becomes an active and efficient agent in attaining the end. The United States, her system, national character, historical facts, people, habits, manners, and morals, for obvious reasons, have



been one principal object for these assaults, but as I may have occasion to speak of the Anglo-American question hereafter, I will now allude only to the internal action of the system.

Thirty-six years ago, you and I were school-fellows and class-mates, in the house of a clergyman of the true English school. This man was an epitome of the national prejudices, and, in some respects, of the national character. He was the son of a beneficed clergyman in England; had been regularly graduated at Oxford and admitted to orders; entertained a most profound reverence for the king and the nobility; was not backward in expressing his contempt for all classes of dissepters and all ungentlemanly sects; was particularly severe on the immoralities of the French revolution, and, though eating our bread, was not especially lenient to our own; compelled you and me to begin Virgil with the Eclogues, and Cicero with the knotty phrase that opens the oration in favour of the poet Archias, "because their writers would not have had placed them first in the books if they did not intend people to read them first;" spent his money freely, and sometimes that of other people; was particularly tenacious of the ritual, and of all the decencies of the church, detested a democrat as he did the devil; cracked his jokes daily about Mr. Jefferson and Black Sal, never failing to place his libertinism in strong relief against the approved morals of George III., of several passages in whose

History, it is *charity* to suppose he was ignorant; prayed fervently of Sundays; decried all morals, institutions, churches, manners and laws but those of England, Mondays and Saturdays; and, as it subsequently became known, was living every day in the week, *in vinculo matrimonii*, with another man's wife!

You know this sketch to be true. Now, I do not mean to tell you that all the stronger features of this case are at all national, but I think the prejudices, the pretending condemnation of the moral defects of those who did not think exactly as he did, and the blindness to his own faults, are. In this particular, that church of which our old master was a member, in doing the state good service, has done itself a grave injury. The popular mind has been so acted on, by a parade of religious influences, that millions of Englishmen attach a sense of criminality to the efforts of those who would reform the government. I think you must have observed how seldom one has found an active English reformer left in possession of a fair moral character. The course has usually been to commence by assailing the liberals with sneers, in connection with their origin, their pursuits, and their motives. These attacks have been addressed to the abject feeling which the establishment of an aristocracy has formed in the minds of the mass, and which has created a sort of impression that birth and fortune are necessary to

the civic virtues. He who should make it matter of reproach against a public man in France, that he came of the people, would lose more than he would gain by his argument, and yet it is a constant weapon of the English party tactics. Failing of success, by these means, the next assault is against the character.

The English themselves are apt to attribute the latter expedient to a creditable feeling in the nation, which invites, by its moral sense, exposures of this nature. The reasoning may be true in part, or it is true up to the level of the dogmas of the decency-and-seemliness school which the system has created, but it is flagrantly false when viewed on pure Christian principles. Coupled with the grossness of language, the personalities, the vindictiveness and the obvious deformities of hostility and art, with which these attacks are usually made, nothing can be more inherently offensive to the feelings of those, of whom the "chiefest virtue" is charity. But we need no better proof that the whole is the result of a factitious state of things, in which a parade of morals is made to serve an end, than the fact, that, while every man who shows a generous mind is peculiarly obnoxious to be accused of vice, they who are notorious for their misdeeds are not only overlooked, but spoken of in terms of reverence, if they happen to belong to the dominant party. You will understand me; I am not now speaking of the common party abuse,

which varies with events, but of a deliberate and systematic method of vituperation, by means of which the idea of liberalism in politics has become associated in the public mind, with irreligion, libertinism, pecuniary dishonesty, and, in short, with a general want of moral principle. As a consequence, men habitually think of Mr. A——, or Sir George B——, or Lord C——, as persons to be condemned for their sins, though the very vices of which they are accused are openly practised by half the favourites and leaders of the other side, with impunity as regards the public. I can quote to you the instance of Washington, who was accused of being an unprincipled adventurer, at the commencement of the revolution, as a case in point; and I dare say your own scrupulous and pious father, passed for a fellow no better than he should be, with a majority of the well-intentioned English of that day.

It seems to me that there is a singular conformity between English opinion and the English institutions. The liberty of the country consists in franchises, which secures a certain amount of personal rights, and not in a broad system, which shall insure the control of numbers. As individuals, I am inclined to think the English (meaning those who are easy in their circumstances) do more as they please than any other people on earth; while the moment they begin to think and act collectively, I know no nation in which the public mind is so much influ-

enced by factitious and arbitrary rules. Something like the very converse of this exists with us.

I have little to say about the influence which the aristocracy possess through the deference of their inferiors. Strange as it may seem, the subordinate classes take a sort of pride in them. Such a feeling can only have arisen from the depression of the less fortunate, and it is quite plain has gathered no small part of its intensity from any thing but that knowledge which leaves "no man a hero with his *valet-de-chambre*." It exists to a singular degree, in despite of all the bluster about liberty, and I can safely say that I never yet knew an Englishman, I care not of what degree of talents, who did not appreciate the merits of a nobleman, to a certain extent, by his rank, unless he lived in free and constant communion with men of rank himself. I have found the nobles of England, certainly, as I have already told you, but it has often puzzled me to discover the aristocratic mien, the aristocratic ears, aristocratic fingers, aristocratic nails, and aristocratic feet that these people talk and write so much about. I have been often led to think of that *jeu d'esprit* of Hopkinson, where

To

"The *rebel* vales, the *rebel* dales,  
With *rebel* trees surrounded,  
The distant woods, the hills and floods,  
With *rebel* echoes sounded,"

in reading of these marvels. I need scarcely tell

you that an English nobleman is morally much as the highest gentleman of a great and polished empire might be supposed to be, and in physical formation very like other men. His ears may, occasionally, be a little more obvious than common, but he possesses no immunity by which they can be made smaller than those of all around him.

I think this feeling of deference, however, is so interwoven with all the habits of thought and reasoning of the nation, that its *prestige* will long confer an advantage on the nobles of England, unless the torrent of change, by being unnaturally and unwisely dammed, gain so much head as to sweep all before it.

There is no great princely nobility in England, like that which exists on the continent of Europe, and which, royal personages in fact curtailed of their power by the events of this and of past ages, is still deemed worthy of forming royal alliances. In blood, modern alliances, and antiquity, the English nobles, as a class, rank among the lowest of Europe, their importance being owing to the peculiarity of their political connexion with one of the first, if not the very first state of Christendom. I do not know that their private wealth at all surpasses that of the great nobles of the continent, those of France excepted; although there is no inferior nobility here, as there, the younger sons sinking at once into the class of commoners. When the Howards of the fifteenth century were just emerging from

obscurity, the Guzmans, the Radziuils, the Arembergs, and hundreds of other houses were sinking from the rank of princes into that of their present condition. The ancestors of Talleyrand were deprived of their possessions as sovereign counts, a century before the first Howard was ennobled. As to the ancient baronies that figure among the titles of the English, they are derived from a class of men who would have been followers, and not the equals, of the Guzmans and Perigords, five centuries since. There appear to me to be two errors prevalent on this subject ; that of overrating the relative importance and antiquity of the nobility of England, (except when viewed as a political aristocracy, or since the revolution of 1688) and that of underrating the true condition of the English gentry. All this is not of much importance, though I was lately told of a German princess who spoke of a marriage with the House of Hanover, as a *mésalliance* !











